spinning out of control

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/51091837.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham
Additional Tags:	Will Graham Has Encephalitis, Hannibal Lecter has ocd, Eating Disorders, Hannibal Lecter has an eating disorder, Autistic Will Graham, Autistic Hannibal Lecter, Canon Autistic Character, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Character Study, Dissociation, Angst, Hurt/Comfort, Triggers, Not Beta Read, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Blood Kink, Biting, Sexual Tension
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-10-25 Completed: 2024-05-29 Words: 27,310 Chapters: 23/23

spinning out of control

by ly_ace3

Summary

As Will is getting treatment in the hospital for his encephalitis, Hannibal begins to spiral. He reverts back to old habits and food insecurity rears its ugly head.

Notes

CW: This fic contains depictions of OCD behaviors, eating disorders and food insecurity, canon-typical violence. Please read with caution.

chapter 1

He'll be fine.

That's what Hannibal tells himself as he leaves Will's hospital room, having seen the younger man fallen into a restless sleep. Hopefully his sleep would become more restful during his hospital stay.

On the drive home, Hannibal relies on muscle memory. He's not focused on the road in any way. He's thinking about Will. That's all he seems to be able to think about these days. Usually, thoughts of Will inject heat and want through his veins, the anticipation and the potential of the profiler highlighting his day. Right now, however, thoughts of Will send Hannibal down a path of anxiety and genuine concern. He almost let him drown for his own amusement. The man he loves.

There are other ways to bring about potential, Hannibal assures himself as he pulls his Bentley into the driveway. *For now, allow him time to recuperate.*

Hannibal gets out of his car and approaches his front door. He gets his keys from his pocket, unlocks the door, and steps inside. He closes the door behind him and moves to head to the kitchen. No, to the bathroom. His bedroom? Hannibal stands in his foyer, frozen by indecision. His kitchen is his safe space, his domestic domain of art. However, coming from the hospital and seeing Will in such a sickly state, he wants to scrub every inch of his body until he is red and raw. He's also tired, and feels the fatigue of his recent activities and feelings steadily crashing over him, an ocean wave crushing him at a snail's pace.

He loses himself in the decision, spending the next ten minutes trapped in his head, rotating between the choices that are utterly impossible to choose from. He finally decides on the bathroom to shower first, then the kitchen to cook a late light meal, then his bed to rest.

On his way to the bathroom however, he realizes he would need to go into his bedroom to retrieve a change of clothes. He stops just as he was about to enter the bathroom and leans against its door. He has a choice of choosing to change into his pajamas or a more casual outfit to cook dinner in. Hannibal does not want to have to do laundry the next day (laundry is for Wednesdays and/or Sundays, dry cleanings on Fridays. Today is Monday.), but he does not want to cook in his pajamas. What if he spills something on them? Then he would sleep in his underwear and maybe an undershirt of some kind, but the thought made his skin crawl.

He needed the comfort of his pajamas that night. The psychiatrist then notices that he had slid down the wall and was now sitting on the floor. The choice had literally weighed him down, pulling him to the floor. Even through his layers of clothes, he could feel his spine pressing against the cold wall. He looked down and saw that he still had his shoes on (his outside shoes, now he would have to clean the whole bottom floor, the stairs, this hallway-).

Hannibal takes a deep inhale, and tries to take his time on the exhale. Yet the next inhale comes too fast, so the next exhale comes too soon after that, then suddenly his breath is coming in quick pants, the hallway around him is spinning, and Will is in the hospital, and his shoes are still on, and he still hasn't decided what clothes to get out for after his shower.

His brain takes time to slow down- Hannibal isn't sure how long- before he slowly gets himself to his feet. He has to use the wall as support once he's standing. He looks down at his feet and decides to heel off his shoes, using one foot to pull the other out of the offending outwear. He bends down, keeping one hand to the wall, and picks up his shoes with the other hand. He steps heavily down the hall to his bedroom, placing his shoes in their rightful place in the closet. He takes off his jacket, hangs it up next to his other winter wear. He discards the rest of his clothing into a laundry bin. He notices as he places his shirt in the bin that it is more than half full.

Today is Monday. Hannibal does laundry on Wednesdays and or Fridays, dry cleanings on Fridays. The bin is only half full. Logically, he knows that most people wait until the bin is full, and Hannibal knows that he does laundry on Wednesdays and or Fridays, dry cleanings on Fridays.

You have to clean the bottom floor anyways , a voice says casually in his brain. Hannibal can hear the casualness, but there's a creeping familiarity that sinks deep into his gut. *And the stairs. And the hallways. What's one more thing to clean?*

While you're at it , another voice says. *Clean the kitchen.*

Oh, and the bedroom.

The basement. It's totally unsanitary. There's still blood. No there's not. *You missed something* . I cleaned it five times. *Clean it again. Clean it again.*

“No,” Hannibal mumbles out loud. “No, no, not now. Please. Please.” He is pleading with himself. Desperate. Even so, he’s furiously changing into the sweatpants and threadbare T-shirt he cleans in. He shoves his feet into his slippers and grabs his laundry.

He has to do it.

chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Hannibal cleans.

Chapter Notes

This one's short and not too plot heavy, but it does depict some OCD behaviors.

He’s vacuuming his foyer, going over the spots he knows he had stepped on with his shoes. There’s no dirt, no grime, no discoloration or messes of any kind. Yet Hannibal knows he stepped there with shoes he’s not supposed to. So it’s unclean in a different way, one only he can see.

He’s drifting. His thoughts are coming rapid fire to the forefront of his mind, only to be replaced with a completely unrelated thought only a moment later. After a while, they started to cycle to the point where Hannibal could predict which one would be next. Yet he was still far away, out of control.

Vacuuming the foyer turned into vacuuming the entire living room, along with the first floor bathroom and the stairs. His brain helpfully reminds him to clean the hallways, even though by the time he reaches the top of the stairs, it is around 1:30 AM. He would have his first client at 8:30 AM. The urge to finish cleaning persists. He vacuums the hallway.

The kitchen is next. He had no dishes, which was a small relief, but he found himself on his hands and knees, scrubbing the life out of the floor. There’s not a speck before and after, but the mess in his mind couldn’t see that.

His hands are stained red from blood. This is not an uncommon occurrence for Hannibal. Tonight, however, instead of the blood of a rude and unsuspecting victim, he is at the hands of his own punishing mind. He finishes cleaning the floor and takes a moment to stare at his

cracked, dried, and free-bleeding fingers. He gets up and goes to the kitchen sink. The kitchen sink is not cleaned yet. His hands are dirty, bleeding. He needs to clean those first. He goes to the first floor bathroom and washes his hands for exactly 30 seconds. The thousand tiny cuts sting, creating a symphony of sharp pain, but he pats his hands dry and moves back to the kitchen.

His sink is nearly blindingly shiny by the time he's done with it. He washes down the countertops next, then washes them again because, well, he should have done the ones next to the sink first since that was the last thing that he had washed, so he now has to start over. He's tempted to start the sink over as well, but he glances at his phone and sees that it's almost 3 AM.

He takes apart the oven and cleans each piece thoroughly. While those parts are drying, he cleans the oven itself. His hands are bleeding again. He gets out some ACE bandages from a nearby closet and wraps his palms. He goes back to the oven. The parts are dry, but the oven is not. He goes back to the closet and takes out a duster. He goes over the cabinets three times before deeming the oven dry enough to reassemble. He puts the duster back and reassembles the oven. When he is putting in the final rack, he feels his arms shaking. He is tired beyond belief. Hannibal knows that he pushed himself too far, and that he'll be terribly sore in the morning. He also knows that he has to clean the bedroom and the basement.

"Tomorrow," he whispers mournfully to himself. "Just do it tomorrow, please." He drags himself upstairs and enters his bedroom. He strips himself and burrows under the covers. His mouth feels dry and his teeth ache from clenching, his hands are throbbing, and he hasn't taken his shower. Still, he allows sleep to pull him under into uneasy dreams.

chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Hannibal tries to get through his day, but finds it difficult to concentrate.

Chapter Notes

CW: More OCD depictions

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal wakes up in a fog. He blinks up at the ceiling, his blurred vision taking a minute to clear. He rolls onto his side and immediately feels a roaring ache through his body. He groans audibly, but slowly reaches for his phone on the nightstand. He checks the time. 7:55 AM. He groans again, shoving his face into a pillow.

All this for a man you were trying to ruin , he thinks to himself as he swings his legs to the floor. *For the sake of... interest. A deep, persistent interest* .

He shuffles to the bathroom, and showers as quickly as he can in his sore state. When he's done, he brushes his teeth and hair, and puts his deodorant on. He heads back to his bedroom and remembers he hadn't set out clothes the night before. He checks his phone again. 8:15 AM. He has about 15 minutes before his first appointment. He has 15 minutes to drive to go to his office. He will be late.

He knows he will be no help today to any of his clients, but it's too late to contact them all that he is… feeling unwell. He yanks his closet doors open and tries to construct an outfit with what he can see. He grabs his salmon colored shirt and dark waistcoat and blazer, along with his black dress pants. He throws them on the bed and goes to his drawers, where he finds socks, an undershirt, and boxers. He pulls everything on, wincing all the while due to his muscles. He does not even have the thought to smooth everything out or put on cologne.

He grabs his keys, wallet, phone and coat; he rushes downstairs and slips on his shoes in the foyer. Foyer. Living room. Kitchen-

Laundry. He forgot to change out the laundry to the dryer.

“Later,” he grumbles, forcing himself out the door. He locks it. Once, twice, three times. He almost does it a fourth, but then he would have to do it a fifth, and then he would be tempted to finish the laundry now, which would make him even later, which would anger his clients, then he’d be hated, mess up, get caught, lose everything-

“Go. Please, just go,” he tells himself sternly. He walks to his Bentley, gets in, and drives off.

*****

“Oh, Dr. Lecter, you’re alright, you’re never late, usually I’m the one who’s late, please, no need to apologize-“

Hannibal had been able to reach his office at around 8:50 AM, hoping against hope that Mrs. Lee would follow her pattern of being 20 minutes late. Alas, she arrived on time.

Must be some sort of karma, Hannibal thinks bitterly as he sets his things down. Her rambling voice fades in and out as he tries to set up for the day. Good thing he had left all his documents there yesterday as he had been with Will almost the whole day. He straightens out his notebook, hangs his coat on the back of his desk chair and moves over to his cushioned chair. He sits down heavily across from Mrs. Lee and bites back a pained groan.

“Oh, Dr. Lecter, why the long face? Something happen last night? I had something happen just two days ago with my son…”

Hannibal lets her go on, nodding and offering shallow comments in the appropriate pauses in conversation. In the forefront of his mind, he is thinking of the laundry. It’ll be wrinkled, and he’ll most likely have to iron everything.

Shouldn't you visit Will?

You have to clean the bathroom upstairs.

The basement is still filthy. Mold. It'll infiltrate the house if you don't clean it in the next 24 hours.

Hannibal knows there's no mold. He has cleaned the basement five times over since his last kill.

Mold. Slow infiltration. Death.

He tries to focus on Mrs. Lee's monologue on her son's thirteenth birthday party. Something about a rabid raccoon and rabies. He's not terribly sure, nor is he interested. It has nothing to do with her deep rooted anxiety and schizophrenia, and usually he would be gently guiding her back to more important questions. Today, he lets her go on.

When her time is up, she's the one who tells Hannibal the session is over. He shakes his head a little and grimaces.

"Yes, of course, Mrs. Lee, thank-thank you for… uh, thank you for your time today."

As he opens the door to his waiting room for his next appointment he sees Jack standing there, a stern look gracing his face. He looks around and cannot spot Franklyn, so he assumes Jack sent him on his way. Hannibal's mental walls construct themselves high, and he slips on his mask of the collected psychiatrist.

"What can I do for you Jack?" Hannibal asks smoothly. He already knows what this conversation is going to be about, but he puts up an innocent facade.

Jack walks around him and goes into the doctor's office. Hannibal bristles a little at someone entering his space so abruptly. He shuts the door and tries to brace himself for the onslaught that is about to occur. He turns to face Jack.

"Why is it that I don't find out until two hours ago that my best FBI profiler is in the hospital?" Jack demands. Hannibal feels twitchy all of a sudden and goes over to his desk. He starts taking out files from the drawers to rearrange them.

"Will has been suffering for a couple of months, Jack, you know this," Hannibal answers calmly, although under the surface he is bubbling with rage and guilt. Both he and Jack have caused Will immense pain. "He came to me yesterday in a state of almost complete dissociation, and I decided that it was best to take him to the hospital."

"What's wrong with him?" Jack asks. Hannibal is surprised that he sounds genuinely concerned.

"He is suffering from encephalitis- inflammation of the brain. He will be hospitalized for the rest of the week, but it was good that he was hospitalized now. Any longer would have increased the potential for long term effects." He sees that his files are organized alphabetically by last name. He decides to do it by order of his weekly appointments. Why hadn't he done this before?

"Hold on, the rest of the week? The Ripper is out, now, I can't-"

"I'm sorry, Jack, are you suggesting running Will so far into the ground that he is unable to help you catch your beloved Ripper?" Hannibal snips. He shoves a couple of files in the bottom drawer.

Jack sighs.

"I didn't- mean it like that. I-"

“He needs rest, Jack,” Hannibal states. He slams the bottom drawer with too much force, and the two men wince. They’re silent for a moment before Jack speaks.

“So… Will came to you?”

Hannibal has a feeling where this conversation is headed, but he’s feeling… charged. He decides he hates the new order of the files and wants to go back to alphabetical order. That’s how patient files are supposed to be.

“Yes, Jack. Will arrived at my house around 5 PM. He was stuttering, confused, clearly feverish, so I decided that it would be best to bring him to the hospital. He was admitted, and now-” Hannibal clears his throat. “Now he is receiving treatment.” Hannibal finishes taking out all the files again and begins sorting. He risks a glance up at Jack. He sees the other man’s eyebrows raised in slight surprise and possible concern. Hannibal focuses his gaze back at his files. He has to put them back in alphabetical order. Why did he put them out of order?

“...I’m glad he has you. As his psychiatrist,” Jack says.

Hannibal shrugs, sliding the L’s behind the K’s, which are in front of the M- wait. Is it M or N? And after that is, O, right? Maybe P? Oh, dear…

“I am glad Will knows he can come to me for help,” Hannibal responds lightly, mentally trying to remember the middle of the English alphabet. He switches the L’s and M’s. No, wait. Switch back? Hannibal glances up again and sees that Jack has moved closer to his desk. He looks hesitant about something. Hannibal raises his eyebrows once in question and goes back to the files.

“Help in a professional capacity?” Jack asks. Hannibal feels a rush of emotions and drops his files. His papers slip to the floor, and suddenly he cannot hold back.

“ *Šūdas! Išeik iš mano biuro* !” Hannibal exclaims. Jack’s eyes widen and he backs up. Hannibal points to his office door.

“Go, please. I-Jack, just go,” Hannibal grunts out. Jack nods and walks out quickly. He at least has the decency to close the door behind himself.

Chapter End Notes

Translations: Šūdas! Išeik iš mano biuro- "Shit! Get out of my office!"

chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Hannibal visits Will in the hospital.

Chapter Notes

Descriptions of OCD behaviors and overstimulation.

I hope y'all are taking care of yourselves. Sending love.

Hannibal spends ample time standing around, frozen by his racing thoughts before dropping to the floor and gathering up the papers. He makes haphazard piles, not even bothering to see if he put the notes into the correct patient's folder. He does not care generally for them sans a shallow curiosity m, so it does not bother him to leave the files a mess on the floor and leave his office. He sent out a quick email from his iPad that the rest of the sessions were canceled today. He had a… medical emergency.

Hannibal goes to his Bentley and just starts driving, already knowing where he is headed. He passes by his house and ends up at the hospital.

I need to see Will. His mind is greedy for the attention and visuals of the other man. Hannibal has to be in the same room as him or he'll-

I'll continue to fall, spiral deeper. I need to see Will .

"I need to see Will," he tells the receptionist. She looks at him and asks for more information.

I need to see Will. Hannibal's mind is filled with this mantra until he reaches said man's room. He walks into the room and his breath catches when he sees Will's bed empty.

No.

No no no something bad something bad something bad -

Hannibal's breath picks up. He feels his being squeezed by imaginary ropes, squeezing, tightening, strangling- he feels lightheaded- black spots in the corner of his vision-

"Dr. Lecter?"

All of the building feelings leave in a rush, like a dam being broken. Hannibal sees Will standing in front of a bathroom door in the corner of his room that the psychiatrist did not see before. The older man can still see Will's sickly pale skin and dark under eyes, but he's standing on his feet. His haunted look is slightly faded.

"Will," Hannibal breathes out. He feels his arms hang awkwardly at his sides and a silence stretches heavy between them. Will begins to shuffle back to his bed, and Hannibal gives into the urge to touch him (he always does). He rushes to the profiler's side and guides him back under the sheets. Will resists only a little before allowing Hannibal to tuck him in. The doctor checks Will's IVs and monitors; when he is satisfied, he sits stiffly in a plastic chair near Will's head. The younger man looks at him with amusement.

"Miss me that much, Doctor? My appointment isn't until 7:30 tonight," and *oh* , Hannibal can hear the Southern twang in Will's voice that he tries so hard to hide but comes out when he's tired or angry and it makes Hannibal feel strangely warm and-

"Just checking in," Hannibal tells Will weakly, chasing away racing thoughts. "I… I wanted to…" He feels his words and voice fading and he stares at the open door of the room.

He's alive he's fine he'll be fine it's all your fault -

“-Lecter? Dr. Lecter? Hannibal?” Will’s voice suddenly is too loud and Hannibal crushes his fingers into fists and clenches his face. The room is silent for a moment.

“Hannibal? Are you okay?” Will asks softly. But not too soft, firmly enough that it didn’t have that breathy noise and vocal fry that Hannibal hates. Hannibal relaxes his muscles and feels his mask slip on. He nods.

“Yes, sorry, thank you Will. I’m alright.” He attempts a smile, but he knows it’s a grimace. Will frowns a little. He picks up a white plastic cup of water on the tray in front of him and offers it to Hannibal. The doctor takes it gratefully and gulps down the entire glass in a few gulps. He places the cup back on the tray and makes an attempt to meet Will’s eyes. He can't. He stares out the open door again.

“You sure you’re alright Hannibal?” Will presses again. Hannibal feels the tension and twitching return. Call him a hypocrite, but he *hates* being asked how he’s feeling. He knows how he’s feeling at all points, with a hyperintense awareness. He doesn’t need anyone to know, not even Will.

“Yes, Will,” Hannibal snaps. Will’s frown deepens, but he turns his head away and drops the subject. The tension lingers in the background, but guilt overpowers those emotions.

“I apologize, Will… I suppose, I’m not feeling as well as I could be,” Hannibal admits. Will nods once.

“You look exhausted. Did you sleep at all last night?” Will’s tone is amused, but Hannibal can hear hints of genuine concern in his voice. It almost makes him smile.

“Not really, I must admit. I was worried- uh, about my… You.” Hannibal decides to just admit it. He’s too wound up to think of a lie. He sees Will tilt his head out of the corner of his eye.

“Thank you,” the younger man responds simply. The conversation suddenly loses steam, and the two sit in silence that makes Hannibal’s skin itch terribly. Suddenly the room is suffocating, he can’t sit. Will is okay. He can leave now.

“I must be going,” Hannibal says abruptly, quickly getting up and casting a glance at Will. It seems like the profiler wants to say something, but Hannibal flees. He cannot stand the sight of Will, sick and forgiving. He can’t, it’s all his fault, he’s not worthy to be there. So he flees.

chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Hannibal goes home and tries to cook dinner. It doesn't go well.

Chapter Notes

CW: OCD and eating disorder behavior, binging, vomiting, food insecurity, anxiety

Be careful with this chapter, y'all! Lots to do with food and vomiting. If you don't feel up to reading it, please don't! I have other works that are more tame and happy.

Hannibal has no recollection of his drive home once he's in his house. He mechanically makes his way to his kitchen. Before he realizes what he is doing, he is pulling out liver. He supposes this is what he wanted for dinner last night. He doesn't really remember last night very well, however.

He takes out all the spices, sets up the cutting boards, pots, pans, knives, and begins preparing the meal. He notices that he doesn't have a recipe. He has everything he needs, he thinks, to make… something. Maybe he should just roast the liver. With some… potatoes? No, does he have those? He goes to check for vegetables: onions, potatoes, spinach- why not? Should he make dessert? He should make two, just in case. He should also make an appetizer, just to have something beforehand. Did he eat this morning? Is he hungry right now?

I don't think I'm very hungry right now , Hannibal thinks.

Who knows when you'll get to eat again? You still have to clean the basement, that could take all night and into the morning. You have to make everything now and eat it all now, another voice jumps in. Hannibal sighs heavily.

I have to go to work tomorrow though. I can't be sick, or late again. I need -

To clean the basement. You need to cook the appetizer, the main course, and two desserts. You need to eat this. All of it. Then clean the basement. Oh, and the upstairs bathroom and the bedroom.

I don't need to-

Yes you do.

While having this conversation in his mind, Hannibal prepares a light salad.

Make the dressing. How could you forget the dressing?

I have some from last time-

What if it's expired? If you eat it, you could die. Probably slowly, painfully, all alone. Do you want that?

Hannibal feels two perfect tears run down his cheeks as he resigns himself to also making the salad dressing from scratch. He opens his fridge and throws out the bottle from last time. It's completely full. The psychiatrist feels guilt roll over him in nearly paralyzing waves. He doesn't want to die, though, so he has to do it. He just has to.

*****

It takes him about four hours to prepare the dinner, and he leaves the black forest cake and the tiramisu in the oven. He would normally care if there were two separate desserts in the oven simultaneously, but he doesn't have the mental capacity to care at the moment. He goes to his dining room and prepares his place at the head of the long table. He spends about two minutes straightening the silverware on the napkin. He notices a streak on the knife and goes and exchanges it with a new one from the kitchen. There, all set. He brings out the salad to

the dining table, and puts the liver and vegetables on the kitchen island afterwards. He sits in his chair and begins eating the salad.

He has made enough for two people (definitely not having fleeting thoughts of a certain dog-loving empath enjoying a meal with him). He can save the rest of the salad for tomorrow.

What if all the lettuce wilts? What if the vegetables rot? You should eat it all now, just in case , his brain insists. Hannibal knows he has a whole meal to eat after this, and dessert. He eats the whole salad anyways, if only to stop himself from thinking of the what ifs.

He feels reasonably full after the salad, but he goes into the kitchen and sprinkles some garnish on the liver. He looks down at the food when he's done and feels slightly ill. He doesn't want to eat this. He didn't really want to make it, but it was the next cut of meat. It would go bad in five days if he hadn't taken it out.

Why did you not just take it out tomorrow? Whatever. Well, now you should eat this whole thing too, just in case it also goes bad , his brain demands. The sick feeling intensifies.

I'm not hungry , he argues weakly to himself.

Doesn't matter. You don't want to waste it, right? Eat it. You have to eat the whole thing. Right now. Right now.

Hannibal doesn't even bother to go back to the dining room or get utensils. He picks up the liver and takes a large bite. It's overcooked. It doesn't matter. It does, the texture is all wrong. He takes another bite, and before he even finishes swallowing the last one he takes another bite.

The sick feeling is overwhelming now, but he can't stop. He picks up the liver in one hand and scoops up some vegetables in the other. It's too much, his stomach is aching, he needs water, he needs to vomit, no waste, no waste, waste, waste waste waste-

He feels the bile and vomit coming but doesn't register what has happened until he sees the mess in front of him. All over the newly cleaned kitchen. He just cleaned last night. He has to

clean again. He has to throw up again.

Hannibal knows he will not make it to the bathroom, so he settles for the trash can in the kitchen.

All that food, gone to waste , his brain sneers. *What a waste. You shouldn't have eaten anything at all. You weren't even hungry, what's wrong with you?*

A weak sob slips past his lips and slumps his body over the trash can, retching some more. He hears the timer for the dessert distantly, but he can't move. He couldn't move if he tried.

chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Hannibal feels the aftermath of his actions.

Chapter Notes

CW: OCD and dissociation descriptions, eating disorder behaviors, intrusive thoughts

Hannibal's characterization is complex and fascinating. It is interesting to see which acts he would and would not perform, so I tried to add some of my opinions/theories of what would make him uncomfortable/powerless

As always with this story, please take care of yourselves, and if it doesn't seem like something you can read right now, please don't! I have other works that have more light hearted and fun plots.

The next few hours are a blur. Hannibal feels all of the food he made leaving his body. The guilt will come later, but all he can feel now is the emptiness of his overstretched stomach.

He does not remember climbing the steps up to the second floor bathroom, but when he feels his hands touch the sides of the porcelain toilet, he knows where he is. It is a familiar position. After dry heaving the last contents of his stomach, he strips naked. The doctor basically crawls into the shower and turns on the water to its hottest setting. He flinches at its burn, whimpering a little, but he curls his knees up to his chin and lets the blistering stream of water pound his back.

The temperature and body aches are too much. He is not in his body. He is floating above, looking down at himself being beaten down by a viscous stream. He stays floating there until the temperature of the water suddenly plummets and he has to pull himself to a standing position by using the shower gauge. He manages to use his body weight to turn the shower off. He grabs one of the towels off the drying rack near the sink, not caring if it has been washed or not (he often will rotate between four towels, having clean ones for each shower. He is able to clean them on laundry days, and have fresh ones. He once tried using the same

towel for two showers two days in a row, and ended up taking another shower to scrub off the feeling of uncleanliness).

Hannibal dries himself half-heartedly, knowing he will just lay out the towel on his bed and lie naked to air dry. He all but dragged his body to his room, using the walls and door handles as support. Once he reaches his bedroom, he lays the towel on top of his sheets and falls onto it. His body feels heavy, but his brain is a mass of particles, moving at a speed too fast for the human eye to see. He feels paralyzed, unable to stop the endless stream of horrible thoughts assaulting his mind. He cannot even piece their information together, but he knows that they are horrible thoughts. So he feels bad.

He lets it happen, though. Sometimes, when he tries to stop the thoughts or continue through his day (or night, as it happens to be now) as though it were normal, the thoughts will come back twice as strong and even more sickening than before. He is a cannibal, he knows this. He is a psychopath, narcissistic, and he knows that many people consider him the devil (even though they do not know the person they are thinking of is him). However, thoughts such as sexual assault or killing small children (thoughts of eating Mischa, over and over, play like a broken record in his mind) make even his skin crawl. He tries to honor most people in a way only a god can. If they do not deserve it, there are other ways that do not involve personal violation.

Hannibal lies there. He is trapped, his mind palace shrinking into one single room of abject horror that makes him unable to move. He feels tears once again gracing his face, and he wishes the memories and false visions would drip away within the salty water.

Time slips further away. He still cannot move. The thoughts are fading, but now tiredness is taking its hold. This powerlessness is infuriating, but Hannibal feels deserving of it.

An image of Will in the hospital bed is the last thing he pictures before slipping into a restless unconsciousness.

chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Hannibal wakes up and tries to slow down.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a lot lighter, but there are still some mentions of anxiety and spiraling.

I send my love out to everyone reading this.

His phone is ringing. Hannibal can hear it, from a distance as he climbs from the abyss of a restless sleep. His hand grabs around blindly until he is holding his phone. He blinks his eyes, and when they are clear enough for him to read the name on the phone, he groans audibly.

“Hello?” He greets gravelly.

“Dr. Lecter? Dr. Lecter! It’s Esther. I arrived about 30 minutes ago, but you haven’t come out of your office. Are you alright?”

Hannibal is instantly more awake. He sits up, but immediately lands back on his covers, a spell of intense dizziness overcoming him. He coughs a couple of times before responding.

“Esther, I apologize, I am- I am unwell. I will be unable to make our appointment-” He coughs again. He cannot tell if it is involuntary or not. “I will be unable to make our appointment today.”

Esther coos sympathetically. It makes Hannibal’s skin crawl a little.

“Aw, Dr. Lecter. Get well- you always seem so busy, so take some time for yourself.”

It’s myself that’s the problem. I can’t afford to spend time with myself , Hannibal thinks bitterly.

“Of course. Thank you for your understanding, Esther. See you next week.”

“Of course, Dr. Lecter. Goodbye.”

The call clicks in its ending, and Hannibal attempts to sit up once more, cautiously this time. His world still feels off kilter, but he sits up, staring at one spot on the wall ahead of him. He waits until the world under him stabilizes itself. He resigns himself while sitting that he’ll be home ridden a second day in a row. He wants to tear his skin off, layer by layer.

He calls his clients for the day, informing them of his absence, apologizing that he could not have notified them sooner. They are all understanding, sickening saccharine tones of sympathy almost making his ears bleed. After the final call, he tosses his phone back on his nightstand and lets himself fall back down onto the bed. The world whirls again, and Hannibal squeezes his eyes shut to stabilize himself.

He does not wish to dissociate again, but he also knows that he cannot push himself as he has been. He has to find a delicate marriage of resistance and flexibility. It is an easy dance when he masks; when he is with himself, it is impossible. Yet he must try.

He slides off of the bed and takes the towel off the covers. He throws it into the laundry basket. He hunts through his drawers and closet for something casual; a pair of jeans (the texture is uncomfortable, but grounding), a red knitted sweater (no shirt underneath- like the jeans, the texture of wool is grounding), and a pair of thick wool socks. He goes into the bathroom and brushes his teeth. He resists the urge to search under the sink for cleaning supplies. He splashes cold water onto his face and glances up in the mirror. Just a man. No monster today- only a man.

He goes downstairs into the kitchen and immediately recoils at the smell of vomit. It turns his empty stomach, but he changes the trash bag and cleans up some bile that did not make it into

the bin. He washes his hands once, twice, three times. He lets himself have that.

He takes out a pan and the ingredients for a simple protein scramble. With sausage- genuine pork sausage, from a pig, from a farm. He is just a man today; that is all he can handle.

He heats up the buttered pan and prepares the eggs and vegetables. As it cooks, he takes out a glass and pours himself some water. He often has oranges for fresh juice, but he thinks that will lead to bad things. The eggs cook fast, so he adds the vegetables and sausage at just the right time- nothing will be raw or overcooked. Once the scramble is done, he takes it off the heat and scoops a small portion into a bowl, the rest into a Tupperware container. He leaves the pan and spatula into the sink. He will get to them later.

His hand shakes as he retrieves a fork and stabs into his food. He brings up the bite to his lips and tastes.

Immediately his stomach lurches, but he forces the food down with a harsh swallow. He lets the eggs and vegetables and sausage travel down his throat and settle into his stomach to begin digestion. He sips the water. He brings his plate and water over to the kitchen island and takes another bite, repeating the process. He focuses on the food, the nourishment it will provide. Nothing else. He is eating breakfast in his kitchen. Nothing has happened before this moment, and nothing will happen after it.

He finishes the small portion and the glass of water. He puts the dishes in the sink with the pan and the spatula. He places the Tupperware of scramble into the fridge. He feels the food settling. He moves over to the sink and does the dishes. He focuses on the act of scrubbing and organizing the dishes on the drying rack. He does not think of what time it is, how much time he has wasted on just eating, all the people he is abandoning, of Will alone in the hospital, of his basement (which is clean) filthy, molding, lethal-

You are cleaning the dishes , the doctor thinks firmly. He presses his jean-clad legs together and feels the pressure and the fabric grounding him into the moment. He focuses on the wool decorating his arms, bunched up around his elbows. He blinks his eyes furiously, trying to keep himself tethered to the ground.

Once the dishes are in the drying rack, he goes to his living room. He lights a fire in the fireplace and revels in the warmth of the flames. He knows it may grow uncomfortably

warm, but it will keep him here and present.

He finds his pencil and sketchbook. He often uses larger paper, or even canvas, but today he holds a small leather bound sketchbook that he bought at a local market. He settles on his leather couch. The leather is not touching his skin, yet he can feel the phantom sensation of it. He gets up and takes a knitted blanket from a stack in the corner of the room and lays it over the leather. He sits back down and begins to sketch.

His mind may not be aware yet, but his hand knows what to sketch. His heart beats, his eyes blink, and a face is crafted on paper. Curly hair frames critical eyes, patchy beard and a downturned mouth. A graceful neck connects the head to a strong and lithe body made from several years in the forensic field and malnutrition. He does not truly know what hides beneath the ill-fitting wardrobe, but Hannibal allows his imagination to run wild. As the psychiatrist makes the last pencil marks, a squeezing feeling makes itself known in his chest. This feeling has become familiar over the past months whenever he catches a glimpse of this face, whether in person or in his memory. He used to think this feeling crushingly weak, long ago, but he knows now that it simply makes him vulnerable. Vulnerability is not necessarily weak.

Hannibal exhales and closes his sketchbook. He takes notice of his surroundings. He does not know what time it is, but through his windows the sun seems high in the sky. Midday, then.

Hannibal has a decision. He ponders for a moment before getting up from the couch.

He needs to see Will again.

chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Hannibal visits Will in the hospital again, with different results

Chapter Notes

This is a pretty tame chapter, with sweeter moments. I felt both y'all deserved to read something lighter, and I felt I deserved to write something lighter :)

I am sending out my love to everyone reading this- stay safe, check in with loved ones and take care of yourselves!

He drives his Bentley at the speed limit. He is aware of all the stop signs, traffic lights and intersections. When he arrives at the hospital, it is about 3 PM. Plenty of time to have a visit. Possibly to say goodbye to Will after that last disaster of a visit.

He gets out of his car and walks to the building. He informs the front desk of whom he is visiting and he slowly travels to Will's room. He hesitates before the doorway, taking a few breaths. Maybe he should turn around. This isn't a good idea. He's only just starting to stabilize himself, one wrong look or tone could shatter him-

"I can hear breathing. I'm assuming that's you, Dr. Lecter. Jack would just let himself in."

Will's tone is amused. Good. Maybe he's forgotten about yesterday. Or, he's masking to make Hannibal feel better about the circumstances. No matter the reason, Hannibal forces himself into the doorway. His lips curl into a small grin.

"Hello, Will," Hannibal says softly. His chest warms at the sight of Will tucked under covers, but sitting up. The color has returned to his face, and he seems to have been eating. A little relief comes in and a little guilt washes out.

“Please, come in, Dr. Lecter,” Will encourages, gesturing for the doctor to enter. Hannibal takes his place in the plastic chair next to the younger man’s bed. Will turns his head and smiles lightly, eyes traveling up and down the doctor’s form. Hannibal’s cheeks heat at the movement.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you dressed so casually, Doctor. Only ever seen you in a suit, I think,” Will remarks. Conversation. Easy, simple conversation. Hannibal knows how to do this.

“I am taking the day off. No need to wear something so ostentatious only for it to be wasted being worn to sit on the couch,” Hannibal jokes. Will’s eyes lighten and his shoulders shake with silent laughter. However, a cough catches in his throat and Hannibal immediately reaches for the cup of water on the tray in front of Will, which is full. He coaxes Will into drinking the whole thing in small gulps. Once the younger man is done, he settles back into his pillow and Hannibal settles back into his chair.

“I am feeling better, but I think they’re gonna keep me here until Friday. I might be able to escape Thursday afternoon, but I don’t think that’s gonna happen,” Will says, a little glum. Hannibal nods his head in understanding. Having worked in a hospital and been around medicine and healthcare much of his life, he knows that being stuck in a bed monitored by nurses 24/7 is an unpleasant experience.

“I am glad you are feeling better,” Hannibal tells him truthfully. *You may never know* , he thinks. *You may never know how much I need you well, safe, near me, with me at all times* .

Will tilts his head at him. Hannibal shifts, anticipating a question he knows he’ll probably not want to answer. He wants to be truthful with Will though. That is all he wants.

“You said you’re taking the day off, huh? How’re you feeling? You ran out yesterday- anything to do with that?” Yes, Hannibal wishes nothing more than to lay shallow lies on Will’s ears. Yet he cannot. Even if he did, Will’s empathy would, sooner or later, piece together the truth.

Hannibal hangs his head a little. He has never talked about his… conditions before. Even with Bedelia, although he is certain she knows.

“I suffer from what most professionals call obsessive compulsive disorder, and, like you, I am on the autism spectrum. These past few days-” *without you* “-have been especially difficult.” Hannibal does not think he could admit everything to Will right now, here, in the hospital. He does, however, reveal some truths he has told few.

“I had a younger sister. Mischa. A terrible tragedy struck when we were young- I survived, she did not. Next week marks the anniversary of her death.” This is all true. Hannibal will often have compulsive and even manic behaviors during that week, and eating is an extreme hardship.

Will’s eyes turn sympathetic, but they have an undertone of confusion and question. Another piece to the puzzle of Hannibal Lecter.

“Oh, Dr. Lecter… I can’t say sorry, because I don’t have anything to apologize for, but I hope you know that you have my sympathy. As for the behaviors, I can relate to that.” Hannibal finds himself nodding in assent. Autism symptoms vary from person to person, but there are several overlapping characteristics.

Both of the men let silence cover them comfortably. Will stares somewhere over Hannibal’s shoulder, while Hannibal fixes his gaze out the door, watching doctors and patients walk by in a haze. Hannibal is used to noise and constant social babble, but this silence is grounding in a new way. He likes it. He wants to get used to it.

Hannibal checks the time; 4 PM. He has been there for an hour. He glances at Will to find those blue eyes already staring at him.

“You looking to get out of here?” Will asks. There’s lightness in his tone, but Hannibal’s heart sinks. He doesn’t ever want to leave Will, no matter where they are.

“I do not wish to bother you,” Hannibal replies. Will scoffs.

“There’s nothing to bother me from. Jack’s been here once to give some updates, but all the nurses and doctors’ orders are pretty strict on the ‘no work’ rule. Not like the Chesapeake Ripper’s going anywhere just yet, right?”

Hannibal doesn’t nod or shake his head, but he hums his assent. He wants Will to know. He needs him to see him.

“I can’t do much for the first few days after I get home either,” Will continues. “Everyone wants me to adjust to being back home before jumping back in.” Hannibal nods at this statement. Good; Will needs to spend time at home, resting somewhere where he isn’t surrounded by doctors and nurses, somewhere he can fully return to himself-

Before he can stop himself, the words are already tumbling out of Hannibal’s mouth.

“Would you like to come home with me?”

Will’s eyebrows shoot up in surprise. His mouth opens and then closes. His expression is guarded. Hannibal’s entire body is on fire and he stands up abruptly. This is ending too much like their last meeting, but Hannibal does not handle his own humiliation very well.

“I’m sorry Will, I apologize, I shouldn’t have said that-”

“Dr. Lecter, wait.”

Hannibal sits back down as suddenly as he got up. Will seems surprised at this, but what he says next is all the psychiatrist can focus on.

“Are you saying… like, stay with you?” Hannibal wishes he said live, but he might have proposed marriage if Will had asked that.

“Just until you are totally back to yourself. I could help with medication, I-I could provide counsel, full meals, you could even bring your dogs, I wouldn’t mind-”

“You’re totally serious? Even the dogs?” Will cuts in. Hannibal usually hates interruptions, and it often leads to a spot on his menu. When coming from Will, Hannibal lets him, because it is Will.

“Yes,” Hannibal states simply. Will looks around the room for a moment, before looking back at Hannibal. He shrugs casually, but his eyes are grateful.

“Alright, Dr. Lecter. Thank you.”

“Hannibal, Will, if you please.”

“Alright… Hannibal.”

chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Hannibal picks up Will from the hospital

Chapter Notes

CW: Some references to eating disorders, anxiety

This chapter is pretty tame, but there will be heavier angst coming soon, so be warned.

I send my love to y'all!

Hannibal cancels his appointments for the rest of the week. He tells everyone he has succumbed to the flu.

Hannibal does his laundry on Wednesday, and has breakfast and lunch. Dinner was impossible that night- there is not a specific reason, he just finds himself unable to eat. He checks the basement, finally settling his mind that there is in fact no mold. Thursday he sketches almost all day. He wakes up at 11 AM (which is almost unheard of for him), and he spends about one hour making brunch, a sort of charcuterie board style meal. He picks at it throughout the afternoon while he sketches Florence, Lithuania, Will, Will, Will-

As his hand begins to cramp, he takes a moment to flip back through his sketchbook, he realizes that he should probably lock these pages in a box and hide it at the bottom of the ocean. Rough outlines of a scruffy jaw, non-prescription glasses framing all-seeing eyes, full body portraits of the man dressed in practically every period of history, one half-nude sketch that Hannibal hadn’t had the guts to finish. His obsession has literally filled the pages, not only of his mind, but of the physical things around him. The cannibal is unable to decide whether that worries him or excites him. He decides that it excites him.

That night, Hannibal is unable to sleep. Instead, he tidies up the guest room next to his bedroom. He makes a slightly impulsive decision and places an unopened bottle of cologne

in the tiny guest bathroom. It doesn't show ships on the front, but rather a creek surrounded by towering trees. He almost goes out to get flowers, but he shuts the idea down immediately.

"Too soon," he mutters while straightening the guest bed cover for what must be the fifth time. There's always just one wrinkle in the corner at the opposite end. Hannibal eventually forces himself to walk away.

At around 3 AM, the doctor collapses onto his own bed and shuts his eyes. He shifts around on top of the bed cover before lifting up the sheets and trying to settle for at least three hours of sleep. He will be unable to check Will out until at least 9 AM, so he should attempt some rest before then.

The keyword is attempt. Hannibal opens and closes his eyes for a few hours. His thoughts race and slow down so much he almost feels dizzy. At 6:30, he shoves the sheets off and gets in the shower. Once he is dried, he changes into his most casual slacks, an undershirt, and a striped sweater. Will responds better to more casual conversations, so Hannibal does his best to look the part as well. He shaves, puts on moisturizer, and spritzes on his cologne. He looks at himself in the mirror. He notices a slight deepening of the shadows and grooves of his face; his eating has not (and probably will not) been consistent enough to maintain the weight he likes. Hannibal wants to do better.

For Will , a voice whispers.

And for you , another voice whispers, but this voice is much less convincing. For Will it is, until he feels himself again at least.

*****

When Hannibal arrives at the front desk, he doesn't even get to open his mouth before he sees Will being wheeled out. The nurse pushing the chair makes eye contact with the psychiatrist and moves towards him.

“You Hannibal Lecter?” she asks. Hannibal nods and pulls out his driver’s license, just in case, and holds it out for her to read. She inspects for a second before nodding and letting go of the wheelchair handles. She goes behind the front desk to grab the release papers; the receptionist has not arrived just yet. While she does this, Will and Hannibal make eye contact. Will gives the older man a displeased face and gestures to the wheelchair.

“I told them I could walk, but they made a fuss.” Hannibal chuckles.

“You can walk once we get outside,” the doctor responds and Will’s expression turns relieved.

“Thank God,” he huffs. At this moment, the nurse hands Hannibal the papers and he begins signing everything. Once he’s done, he hands the papers to the receptionist who had arrived a few moments ago. The nurse then goes back to her shift, giving a small smile to Will. He returns it politely before his face drops. He still looks exhausted.

The receptionist processes the paper, then hands Hannibal a bill. He glances down at the price and feels himself blanch. The American healthcare system is… well, for lack of a better word, shit.

“This is the bill, and we can have a talk about insurance now, but I have a feeling Mr. Graham will be wanting to get home, so you can call at a-”

“I’ll be paying,” Hannibal blurts out. For what feels like the millionth time, he cannot control his impulses around one Will Graham. However, he knows money is a sensitive subject and that Will probably wants to take care of it on his own. He glances down at Will, and sure enough, there’s a furious glare being directed up at him.

“Absolutely not,” the younger man snaps. “I’ll call later.” The receptionist looks at Hannibal for confirmation. He feels a rush of embarrassed heat flow to his cheeks.

“He’ll call later,” he states weakly. The receptionist nods and bids them a good day.

Hannibal feels the awkward tension as he pushes Will to the patient exit. When they reach the door, he feels the urge to offer his arm and knows he probably should; nevertheless, he allows Will to get up and shift his weight towards the wall for a moment. He shoots Hannibal a look, almost like he's daring the man to pity him and offer help, but when he finds none, they continue out the door.

They reach the car without incident, but Hannibal stays a little behind Will just in case, ready to catch him if he were to fall. The older man opens the passenger side door, mostly on instinct, and is once again at the receiving end of another glare.

"I'm fine, Dr. Lecter. I'm not gonna break anymore," Will spits out. Hannibal winces.

"Sorry. Habit," he says quickly. Will takes this statement and softens a little. He allows Hannibal to guide him into the car and onto the seat. The doctor shuts the door and moves to the driver's side. He gets in and they head to Hannibal's home.

Will is quiet. Hannibal expected this, and he let the silence sit. When they arrive at Hannibal's home, Will is quick to unbuckle and get out of the car. Hannibal quickly gets out as well and goes to the front door. He watches Will go up the steps with a sharp eye, ready to assist him in any way. Will is strong, however, and makes it up. The psychiatrist then unlocks the door and the two men head inside.

"When would you like to get the dogs?" Hannibal asks as they move to the living room. Dogs are a safe topic. Favorable, even. The two of them walk at a leisurely pace, and Hannibal pretends not to notice Will's fingers lightly tracing the wall.

"Maybe after breakfast. I'm so sick of hospital food, I need a real meal- unless you already ate?" Hannibal lets Will's question go unanswered until they are both seated on the couch. There's only about an arm's length of distance between them, but Hannibal feels as though Will is in a different room.

"I have not eaten yet, no. I can prepare something, if you would like?" Hannibal offers.

“I don’t want to inconvenience you, but… I’ll take it if you’re willing to make it?” Will says questioningly. Hannibal feels something inside of him purr. Even if he’s reluctant, he’s willing to receive something Hannibal is giving him.

I wonder what his limit is- what other gifts he would be willing to receive , Hannibal thinks.

“No inconvenience whatsoever, Will. Remember, I offered my house to you, and that includes the services that come with it.” Hannibal immediately regrets his word choices. Will seems to notice, and smirks playfully.

“Oh really doctor? Something specific you want to order?” Will’s tone is overly flirty, and he bats his eyelashes in such a ridiculous manner that Hannibal has to stifle a giggle. A *giggle* .

“Just relax, I’ll take care of breakfast,” Hannibal says simply, although he’s smiling as he speaks. Will nods. Hannibal stands and goes to the kitchen. He hears Will shifting around on the couch, and as Hannibal glances back, Will’s head has disappeared.

Hannibal’s body feels too warm. It’s wonderful.

chapter 10

Chapter Summary

hannibal makes will breakfast.

Chapter Notes

CW: Eating disorder & OCD behavior, dissociation, anxiety

Continuing to send my love to y'all

Hannibal hasn’t made French toast in months; he thinks today is a good day to make it.

He prepares the bread with egg, sugar, and spices. As the toast grills, he cuts up strawberries and mixes it with raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. He flips the French toast. He takes out homemade butter that he stored in the fridge along with Vermont maple syrup. He finds powdered sugar in one of the cabinets. Once the French toast is cooked, he cuts two slices and dusts the powdered sugar on. He places the fruit mixture, maple syrup container, and a few cuts of butter onto a tray with the prepared French toast.

It’s a slightly alien feeling for Hannibal, preparing something comforting for someone he loves. He expected fireworks in his stomach and to be overcome with dizziness. Instead, he feels peace and comfort in domesticity. It’s thrilling in its own, grounding way.

As much as he normally loathes eating on softer furniture, Hannibal carries the tray into the living room and places it on the coffee table. He takes a moment to take in Will curled up under a blanket, eyes closed, face peaceful. The feeling of peace settles deeper.

“Will,” Hannibal speaks softly, nudging Will’s shoulder gently. It takes a few touches, but Will’s eyelids eventually flutter open. He sniffs, and his eyes widen. The younger man sits up clumsily in excitement. Hannibal goes to his side just in case. Will doesn’t pay him attention, focusing on the tray of prepared food.

“You made that? For me?” Will asks. Hannibal cannot look away from the disbelieving look on his face; it makes him simultaneously angry that no one had cared for him in such a way, and proud that he could be the one to provide that care.

“Of course. I thought it would be a nice meal after eating the hospital’s idea of… food.” Will chuckles at Hannibal’s disgusted tone.

“Anything you make is going to be better than that shit,” Will responds. He takes the tray off the coffee table and places it carefully in his lap. Hannibal looks down and realizes that he did not provide a drink or utensils.

“Let me get you utensils. And would you like coffee? Juice? Water?” Hannibal offers. Finally Will looks at him, and Hannibal gets the force of the appreciative look from the other man. It makes Hannibal’s heart open a little more. If he sees him anymore, his heart will be bleeding free and he will not be able to stop it. Hannibal feels terrified; it’s exhilarating.

“Thank you… Hannibal. I’ll take a cup of coffee” Will says. Hannibal gives a brief smile before basically running to the kitchen. He gets out a fork and knife and begins to prepare the coffee machine. He takes out two mugs, feeling a familiar caffeine withdrawal headache coming on. Once the machine is done, he pours a generous amount of coffee into each mug. He pours a dash of cream into his own mug, but he knows Will prefers his coffee black. He carries the mugs in two hands while gripping the utensils with his fingers.

When he arrives at the couch, he finds a rather endearing sight. Will munching on the fruit with his hands, eyes closed in satisfaction. Hannibal sits down carefully next to him, trying not to disturb him.

Will’s eyes open anyways, and he looks over at the doctor, slightly embarrassed. Hannibal can’t have that.

“Would you prefer to eat with your hands?” He asks. It’s a genuine question. Hannibal may be a stickler for rules at the dinner table and parties, but it would be hypocritical to criticize how one eats when only around friends. Or alone. He definitely can’t speak about manners when he is alone.

“No, I-I appreciate you getting utensils,” Will replies, stuttering slightly. Hannibal offers the mug of black coffee and utensils and Will takes them. He places the mug on the tray and immediately begins cutting the toast into smaller pieces. Hannibal takes a sip of his coffee and watches Will. When the younger man is done cutting one piece of toast, he picks up the maple syrup and pours a small drizzle over the cut pieces. He cuts off a small section of butter and spreads it on a few pieces. He stabs at the toast and begins eating. He starts off slow, but soon he is shoveling fruit and toast into his mouth so fast that Hannibal feels that he has to intervene.

“Will, Will, slow down, you’ll choke,” Hannibal warns, placing a hand on the tray. He knows that a hand on Will’s shoulder, even lightly, has a high probability of a hostile response. Will takes a breath, but his cheeks are full like a chipmunk’s. Hannibal has to stifle a chuckle, but it doesn’t work. Will gives him a playful glare and chews his food. Hannibal takes a few more sips of his coffee. Hannibal looks down at Will’s plate and sees that he has almost finished his food. It makes the psychiatrist unspeakably happy.

Will puts down his utensils and exhales heavily. He takes a moment to breathe and digest. Hannibal lets his eyes wander, and they land on the window across from the couch. He lets his mind float for a moment, not quite dissociating, but in a state that allows himself to be in his head and recognize where he is. In this moment, this state is comforting. Other times, he can become a prisoner, stuck between worlds.

“That was incredible, Hannibal, thank you,” Will’s grateful statement snaps Hannibal out of that state. It’s not jarring, but it takes a moment for Hannibal to fully grasp Will’s words and respond.

“It was a pleasure Will, your welcome,” Hannibal says. Will sends him a quick grin and then goes to his coffee. He takes a sip and his eyes brighten.

“Black coffee. You remembered.” It’s a statement. Hannibal feels another layer being pulled back, a puncture being poked in his heart. He doesn’t feel panicked yet, so he allows it.

“Yes. Although it’s not hard to guess. Like meals and other drinks, types of coffee and their additives reflect the person drinking them,” Hannibal teases. Will smiles wide at this, his eyes crinkling in the corner. They sit in silence, drinking their coffee. Hannibal is almost high on the domestic feeling. He wants it to last-

“Are you going to eat? You said you didn’t eat this morning, and I don’t see a tray for you,” Will says, and all of the feelings Hannibal has been having this past few hours come crashing down. He almost loses his grip on the mug in his hands, a numb sensation creeping in. His eyes dart back to the window, wanting to avoid eye contact.

He hadn’t planned on eating this morning, or today at all. His sole focus is Will. How could he think of himself? Will needs him, it’s partially Hannibal’s fault he was in the hospital in the first place.

He must have taken too long to respond, because when Will starts talking again, his tone is concerned.

“Hannibal? Are you going to eat?” Will asks gently. Involuntarily, a strangled whimper comes from the back of his throat. Hannibal hears Will place the tray back on the coffee table.

“Hannibal? Can you hear me? You don’t have to eat anything right now, but you should eat something sometime today. I know it’s a hard few weeks during this time, but-” Will’s coaxing is cut off by Hannibal, who feels control slipping away. His body is becoming numb around him. The floating feeling is slowly coming back, but it’s bad. Bad is the only word that comes to mind.

“No. Eat-no. I-no, no, no,” Hannibal mutters, eyes trained on the window. He’s not seeing anything. The mug slips from his grasp and the half-finished coffee spills onto the carpet. Even without seeing it, Hannibal knows it will stain. He has to clean. He has to clean.

“I- it’s going to stain,” Hannibal croaks weakly. He stands abruptly. He feels Will’s worried gaze burning into him.

“Hannibal, wait, sit down, it’s okay-”

“It’ll stain. I have-I have to clean. It’s going to stain, and I have to clean it up.” Hannibal repeats this a few times as his legs carry his body to the closet with cleaning supplies. His mind watches him pull out supplies. His mouth is moving, but making no sounds. The older man hears Will come up behind him.

“Hannibal, what’s going on? You-did I say something?” All of a sudden, Will’s presence is stifling. Hannibal turns to face him. His expression must be frightening, because Will takes a step back. Deep down, a seed of regret roots itself in his gut. He does not register it at this moment.

“You should-rest more. Third room on the second floor,” Hannibal utters coldly, choking out the words in harsh phrases. He turns back around to finish getting out the cleaning supplies.

I have to clean It will stain I have to clean It will stain …

chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Will's POV, some of his thoughts on what's happening

Chapter Notes

Nothing too heavy or long (I've been busy, sorry), but some descriptions of Hannibal's OCD behavior

Sending my love to y'all

Will Graham knows Hannibal is the Chesapeake Ripper. He knows that the doctor had been messing with his mind, poking at him, not quite breaking him, but opening him slowly.

Will is not sure if he can forgive him for that just yet. However, he does know that Hannibal stopped, and is insistent on his recovery. Why the sudden change of heart, Will is still unsure. He wants to find out. He wants Hannibal to admit he is the Ripper. Will wants… a lot of things now that he has met Hannibal, some more legal than others.

All of that is in the back of his mind at the moment, for now. He is sitting in a beautifully prepared guest room, cleaned and organized by Dr. Lecter's eye. Will can't appreciate it. He is thinking about the man downstairs, who he has now seen in a totally different light. A familiar light, if Will is being honest with himself.

Will gets up and walks into the small bathroom in the corner of the room. He turns on the light, and when he looks at the counter, he lets out a laugh. He picks up the cologne bottle, opens it, and inhales. He is surprised to find that he enjoys the smell. He appreciates the thought that Hannibal put into the gift, even if it feels a little backhanded.

He spritzes a little on himself and looks at himself in the mirror. His color is completely back, but he is still noticeably gaunt. Hospital food should not be constituted as real food.

He steps out of the bathroom, shuts the light off and goes to sit back down on the bed. Yet he can't. He makes a decision; he goes downstairs quietly, trying not to make too much noise. Once he gets downstairs, he spots Hannibal in the living room, on his hands and knees, scrubbing the carpet. Will approaches him carefully.

"Hannibal?" Will asks softly. The psychiatrist doesn't even flinch. Will sits on the edge of the couch, and takes a moment to watch Hannibal. The doctor's eyes are glazed and slightly bloodshot. His hands are cracked and red, and Will can see cuts that are starting to bleed. Blood is running down the sides of his knuckles and being absorbed by the rag he is using to scrub the carpet. It seems Hannibal has been at this for the whole time Will had been in the room (which was about 20 minutes). The spot on the carpet has been ripped and ruined by the doctor, but Will can tell Hannibal doesn't notice.

Will slowly slides off the couch and sits on the floor next to Hannibal. There's so much he doesn't know about this man, yet Will knows him better than anyone he has known in his life. He has a feeling it's the same way for Hannibal.

"Hannibal, I don't know if you can hear me," Will starts, "but I wanted to let you know I really appreciate the breakfast you cooked for me. No one's done anything like that for me in… well, I don't think anyone's done something like that for me." Will notices that Hannibal's scrubbing has lost some of its intensity, but he isn't responding. He's listening, though, so Will keeps going.

"Hannibal… I know." Will is testing Hannibal. Not only to see how responsive he is in this moment, but also how he will react to Will knowing him. Seeing him.

Hannibal's scrubbing slows to a stop. The older man lifts his head to meet Will's eyes. An emotional storm is swirling within those hazel irises; fear, hope, sadness, guilt… It's almost too much for Will to look at. There are tear tracks on his cheeks now, and the redness in his eyes is more pronounced.

The doctor looks desperate to say something, opening and closing his mouth a few times. No sound comes out, however, and he hangs his head in resignation. Will moves in carefully, not wanting to scare Hannibal off. He gently takes the rag from the other man's strangling grip, tugging a few times before Hannibal finally releases the rag. Will places the rag on the carpet,

but immediately picks it back up when he sees Hannibal's stressed gaze. He probably thinks of it as making more of a mess. Will wants to do everything he can to bring Hannibal back down, so he'll take the rag with him for now.

Will holds out his other hand, waiting for Hannibal to take it. Hannibal's gaze flits back and forth between Will's hand and his face, as though he's looking for some joke or prank. Will tries to fix his face to be as welcoming as possible. He watches the psychiatrist's bleeding hand lightly touch his own, and Will wraps his fingers loosely around the hand.

"Would you like to get up?" Will asks. Hannibal nods slowly. A new flow of tears is coming from his eyes; Will wants nothing more than to wipe them away, but his hands are full (literally).

"Come on; let's go upstairs," Will says, gentle but firm. Hannibal nods again in agreement.

chapter 12

Chapter Summary

will cleans hannibal's hands

Chapter Notes

Sorry for such a long wait for this one! I've been quite busy, but I found some time to write more.

Warnings for this chapter would be mentions of Hannibal's self-harm wounds.

I am sending my love as usual

Hannibal is being led upstairs. He’s in his bathroom. Will is running their hands under the water coming from the sink tap. Hannibal should feel the sting, but he does not notice. He does notice the pattern of plaid on Will’s flannel, the scruff of beard that seems a few days overgrown, the focused expression on his face.

Hannibal notices things more acutely than others. He has used this to his advantage (although the overstimulation can be the occasional hindrance in his plans) and play the field with expert precision. Each person is a pawn, a tree in a large forest. A pig in a pen. Will, however, pulls his wide gaze to a singular point, blocking interference from around him or information he could use. His focus becomes single-minded to the man currently cleaning his bloody hands.

He wants to thank him. He wants to kill him. He wants to hold him in his arms at night. He wants to hunt with him. He wants to carve off his own skin, open his ribs, and replace his heart with the feeling of being with Will Graham.

“Thank you,” Hannibal croaks. Will looks up, surprised. Hannibal is surprised as well. It’s not the words he wants to have come out, though, so he tries again.

“I… I’m sorry, Will,” Hannibal whispers. He pulls his eyes down towards their hands, which are still touching under the running water. Hannibal watches Will turn the faucet off. He hears Will sigh- not annoyed, not frustrated, just an exhalation of air.

“Hannibal,” Will starts. The older man does not look up. He cannot. Or maybe he does not want to. Will sighs again, this time slightly annoyed. It almost makes Hannibal smile.

“Hannibal,” Will tries again. Hannibal still does not look up, but Will continues.

“I know about you. I know who you are. I know what you’ve been doing to me- or at least, I’m assuming it’s you who’s been doing this to me. I mean, that’s the only way this really makes sense. The Chesapeake Ripper screwing with the only person who can get close to him. If it’s not you, then someone has a very harsh and specific grudge against me. Maybe Freddie Lounds.” The two men chuckle. Hannibal decides to risk looking up. He wants to; the pull of the man opposite of him is too strong.

Will is staring intently at him, but his eyes are focused just about his eyebrows. It allows Hannibal to study the younger man’s irises, the striking blue of them making him almost self conscious of his own brown eyes. Sometimes he thought of them as rather plain. Other times, he thinks he can see hints of red in them in the mirror, late at night.

“I have to think you're repulsive now.” Will’s voice is quieter, but much deeper. Harsher. Hannibal feels his heart sinking. He wants to hide away, to leave, go to Florence, France, anywhere but here, so he does not have to face rejection. Yet he forces himself to stay. He needs to remember exactly what he has done wrong to make sure he never opens himself up again like this.

“Everything you have done is everything I have tried to deny in myself for what feels like my entire life.” Hannibal’s breath catches. He knows this, but Will has not said it aloud. Hannibal sees Will’s pupils grow a fraction larger. Hannibal’s heart rate doubles in seconds.

“Lying in that hospital bed, feeling lost, I spent those days and nights thinking about what you’ve done. About…” Will leans in closer. His eyes come down to meet Hannibal’s, and the doctor feels his stomach drop out of his body.

“About what I could do.”

Hannibal’s thoughts have escaped his head, maybe never to return. No past worries or future concerns. Only him and Will, standing in the psychiatrist’s bathroom, revealing themselves to each other.

Will leans back a little, and Hannibal worries he’s sent out some sort of unconscious signal of disapproval, but Will looks… anticipatory. It’s like he’s been lying in wait.

“I won’t ask for anything now- I don’t think either of us are ready.” Hannibal knows this to be true, even as it pains him to admit it. Will turns the faucet back on and brings Hannibal’s hands back into his grasp. The touch is more firm this time, like he’s taking something from the older man.

“Alright,” is all Hannibal says in response. He lets Will clean his self-inflicted wounds as the lines between beasts and enemies have been blurred to the point of erasure.

chapter 13

Chapter Summary

will and hannibal go to bed.

Chapter Notes

hey everyone! this chapter is soft. no warnings here.

I am sending my love again.

Will hasn't had many opportunities to lead someone to a bedroom, but this is the first time that it hasn't ended in a sexual nature.

After he had cleaned Hannibal's hands and wrapped them, he asked the other man if he still wanted Will to stay the night. Hannibal responded with an immediate yes that both warmed and broke Will's heart. So the two of them got ready for bed, together, in a strange, domestic dance. It was so surreal that Will couldn't be sure that it was happening, that it wasn't just another hallucination. The only things keeping him grounded were the light brushes of contact with Hannibal and the true vulnerability in the doctor's eyes.

Once teeth are brushed, Will goes back to the guest room to change. He finds the drawers are stocked with expensive looking articles of clothing, probably worth more than any amount of money Will has ever seen in a lifetime. He's almost too scared to touch any of it- even looking at it feels like he is tainting something precious- but he allows himself to take what he wants. Hannibal has let him in, and now Will has the freedom to take.

He strips down to his boxers before taking out a muted royal blue silk pajama set. He chuckles aloud, feeling the flowy material slide easily between his fingers. The excessiveness of the fabric and the color match the pretentious side of Hannibal well, but they also show the care he is willing to put into every aspect of his life. He pulls on pajama bottoms before sliding his arms into the sleeves of the shirt. It's a button up (Will has never owned a button up pajama shirt in his life, much less a real pajama set, unless a worn out black T-shirt and

black boxers count), and as he reaches his second to last button, there's a soft knock on the door. Will abandons his task with the buttons and goes over to the door. He opens it, finding Hannibal standing sheepishly. It is a sight that Will has gotten used to over the past few hours.

"I feel guilty for disturbing you again, but I… wanted to thank you. For tonight. And I… wanted to apologize." Unlike earlier, Hannibal does not hang his head to avoid Will's face, but instead displays his regret and shame. Will can't tell if this makes him more uncomfortable or appreciative of the other man, but he can respect the effort this must be taking. Talking is difficult when you have to choose every word in a conversation carefully so as to not expose yourself, but sometimes speaking from the heart is worse. Will nods, acknowledging Hannibal to continue.

"I have been alone for most of my life. Everyone that stands near me doesn't know me, and even if I wanted to pull them in, they wouldn't be able to stand it. Yet when I met you, as cliche as it sounds, you are different. I could see everything you are, but I also could see everything you could be. All you would need is a guide. I-I knew it would be difficult, perhaps even painful, and I thought it wouldn't matter. I thought I wouldn't care. But I did. I do care, and seeing you suffer was-" Hannibal cuts off with a sob, covering his mouth with a hand. Will doesn't spot any tears, but he doubts that the doctor has any left to spare.

"Hannibal," Will says gently. He sees him now. Hannibal has let him in, shown him everything he is, and now Will has the chance to welcome him into his own world. His mind. Even his heart. And Will realizes, in that moment, he wants it desperately.

Will reaches out and carefully takes Hannibal's hand off his mouth. He threads their fingers together. Will offers his other hand, and after only a moment's hesitation, Hannibal takes it. Will begins to walk backwards, carefully leading Hannibal towards the bed. Nothing is happening tonight; it's too soon. Neither of them are in a stable enough state for something so rigorous and intimate. However, Will can tell Hannibal needs him near. He needs to see him and touch him. Will can allow that.

"Let's go to bed," Will says. It's not a question. It's an invitation. Will sits on the edge of the bed, still holding Hannibal's hands. The older man is standing over him, somehow looking small. His eyes widen slightly and dart back and forth between Will and the bed. Will grins in what he hopes is a reassuring way.

“I assured you nothing was gonna happen tonight, and I intend to keep my word, Doctor,” Will teases. Hannibal’s gaze softens and he sits down next to Will. Their hands are still clasped together. Their thighs are almost touching. Will bumps his foot lightly against Hannibal’s. The other man returns it. They smile at each other, and Will now knows what everyone was talking about in high school when they were playing footsie with their crush under the lunch table. Except instead of a cute gesture, this was a sign of trust. They’re on the same page; the two of them know what they want.

“Shall we?” Hannibal asks. Will nods, knowing that he’s referencing going to sleep. The weight of the day has been pressing on his shoulders for a while, but now it feels crushing. The two men release their hands (reluctantly) and go to each side of the bed. Will crawls under the warm sheets and comforter before noticing Hanniball still standing next to the bed, watching him. Like he expected Will to run at the last moment and betray the night they had to the authorities. Will scoots over to the other side of the bed and pulls the covers back.

“Are you getting in?” Will demands mockingly. He tries to add a joking tone to his words, but Hannibal is still hesitant. He sits down, waits a beat, then swings his legs under the covers. Will doesn’t pull them over their bodies just yet, not wanting to shock the other man.

“Do you think you’ll be able to sleep tonight?” Will asks quietly. Hannibal shakes his head. He reaches down and, after a nod from Will, pulls the covers over them.

“I don’t think I will either, to be honest,” Will admits. “But it’ll be nice to just… lay here. With you,” he clarifies. Hannibal grants him a small smile that manages to convey all the adoration in the world. Will feels like he could melt into the mattress.

Will lays on his side, facing Hannibal. The doctor is staring at the ceiling, body ridged. He’s still waiting for the other shoe to drop. Will wonders if he’ll ever stop waiting.

“Do you want to talk?” Will offers. Hannibal doesn’t move for a second, and Will worries that he’d dissociated again; however, Will receives a slow nod.

“You don’t have to say anything; I can just… talk *to* you,” Will says. Hannibal gives him another slow nod, and Will fills the silence. He fills the space with stories of Louisiana, of his dogs, and near 3 AM, when he’s sure Hannibal has fallen asleep, he whispers of a thought that has crept into his mind since he had met Hannibal. Something he has been pushing down

into the depths of his mind, but he pulls it into the light- because Hannibal understands this intimate, gruesome mind of his, and wants to love it. Will feels himself smile when he sees a quirk of Hannibal's lips. Awake or not, they are connected.

chapter 14

Chapter Summary

it's breakfast time

Chapter Notes

Hello! Happy New Year! I'm back with another chapter!

I send everyone my love in this new year; this chapter is pretty tame and domestic, and honestly, it felt very nice to write. It might be a little out of character, but I am planning some... more in character activities for this story, so hang in there :)

If peace was a concept unfamiliar to Hannibal before, it is certainly not the case anymore. Will's voice was better than any drug or white noise to lull him to sleep. Although the sleep was dreamless, when he wakes the next morning, he thinks he can remember every detail Will had whispered in his ear. Maybe he is imagining it; however, the feeling of significance is there.

When Hannibal is blinking drowsiness out of his eyes the next morning, Will is not in bed. Hannibal reaches over and feels the sheets. Not cold, but Will has been up for a little while. A fleeting moment of panic overcomes his mind. Flashes of Will driving home, calling Jack, the FBI breaking down his door and him being sent off to prison…

Suddenly, the scent of coffee fills the room, and Hannibal can hear the sounds of pans clanging in the kitchen. The older man notices that his bedroom door is open, and all of the panic is instantly gone. Will is here. Will is cooking *breakfast* . No one has cooked him anything… Well, he can't remember.

Normally, Hannibal would be fuming at the idea of someone in his kitchen, messing with his tools and touching all of the equipment. Even now, it's a little difficult not to feel some discomfort at someone else in his space. However, the gesture done by the man he loves is enough that Hannibal gets dressed with a smile on his face.

As he comes downstairs, Hannibal hears a faint melodic humming. It makes the smile on his face grow increasingly wide. Will's tone and musicality is rough, but it has a charm that Hannibal is unable to resist. The psychiatrist walks as quietly as he can into the kitchen, hoping to surprise Will. Unfortunately (but the situation is anything but unfortunate), Will is standing in front of the stove and notices Hannibal right away. The other man's eyes brighten and he looks like he wants to come closer to him, but luckily, he stays at the stove. He's cooking scrambled eggs.

"Hey, Hannibal," Will greets him, his voice still gruff with sleep. The roughness of his speaking voice is even more beautiful than the humming; Hannibal hopes he will be able to hear both again soon.

"Good morning, Will. Did you sleep well?" Hannibal asks, but he has a feeling the answer is no. Despite the relaxed and happy expression on Will's face, the dark circles under his eyes have not dissipated in any way, and his eyelids are drooping slightly.

"Not bad. Busy most of the night, actually, but I didn't mind," Will admits with a small smile, and Hannibal feels himself blush. He doesn't think he's ever blushed. The doctor clears his throat and moves closer to Will.

"Thank you, Will," he whispers, his voice almost lost in the sounds of sizzling eggs. Will hears him though, and sends him a small grin. The younger man picks up a spatula and begins moving around the eggs. They're almost done, by the looks of it, so Hannibal goes over to the cabinets on the other side of the kitchen to grab some glasses. He passes by the coffee machine on his way to the fridge and notices that it has completed its task, so after pouring two glasses of orange juice, Hannibal grabs two mugs and fills them with coffee. A dash of cream and sugar for him, black for Will.

By the time Hannibal has brought the drinks over to the coffee table in the living room (the dining room feels impersonal for such a vulnerable state they're both in), Will has finished with the eggs. Hannibal goes back to the kitchen to help bring them over when Will shoos him away.

"Go sit, Hannibal. Just a minute, I'll be there," Will promises. Hannibal feels the nagging of responsibility in his gut, but he nods and goes back to the couch. He picks up his mug of

coffee and sips. It burns his tongue, but he cannot be bothered about it. The steam rising from the coffee is not helping the redness of his face.

Hannibal loses time, his mind solely focused on Will and waiting that he has almost dissociated before the other man comes in with the plates of food. Hannibal looks up at him, a sunflower to the sun.

“Here,” Will says while handing him a plate. Hannibal thanks him and takes the plate, and looks down in shock. It’s not just eggs; Will had made toast, with the homemade strawberry jam Hannibal kept hidden behind some foodstuff in the refrigerator. Will had also made a small bowl of plain yogurt, topped with granola and berries. Hannibal’s heart aches in the most pleasant way.

“You don’t have to eat all of it,” Will assures him. His eyes are darting around, like he’s nervous he’s done something wrong. He’s only done everything right, and Hannibal needs him to know that. “I just thought you would want some options.”

“Will,” Hannibal says softly, reaching out one hand to place on top of Will’s while balancing the plate on his lap. “It’s perfect. Really, thank you.”

Will smiles and ducks his head. Hannibal sees pink tinging his cheeks and the tops of his ears. Butterflies seem to have made permanent residence in Hannibal’s stomach.

“Don’t thank me until you’ve tried it; I haven’t cooked eggs in a spell,” Will admits.

“I’m sure they’ll be wonderful,” Hannibal says. The pink on Will’s face darkens to a red.

Hannibal picks up his fork and begins to eat the eggs- and they’re perfect. Not because they’ve been cooked perfectly (Hannibal notes a slightly burnt taste, rubbery texture), but because Will took the time to prepare this meal for him. The food sits uncomfortably in his stomach, but the doctor doesn’t feel sick. He feels nourished.

Will sits back comfortably on the couch next to Hannibal, nursing his coffee. He's not looking at the older man, but his body is open towards him. As he takes his next bites, Hannibal slowly angles his body towards Will. During one move, he accidentally hits the younger man's knee.

"Oh- sorry, dear Will," Hannibal apologizes quickly. He takes a long drink of juice to cover up his embarrassment. However, Will doesn't even acknowledge this.

"'Dear Will?'" he says with a smug tone of voice. Hannibal glares at him, although there is no heat behind his eyes. Will cracks a lopsided smile, and Hannibal feels brave enough to finish the eggs.

"You know, you don't have to force yourself. I-I don't want you to get sick or anything, I mostly added the toast and yogurt for options," Will says. Hannibal is grateful that he's verbalized his concerns, making sure that the psychiatrist knew he was able to stop. There was someone here to help him be in control.

"Thank you, Will," Hannibal says, dipping his head to emphasize his thanks. Will returns the nod. They smile at each other over their next sip of coffee. Hannibal wants to hold this man, flesh, blood, and bone. His mundane thoughts of breakfast overlap his need, his desire, his love of this man. It's not as overwhelming as Hannibal would have assumed it would be. The stream of consciousness flows easily, uninterrupted by violence or anger or hunger. He lets it wash over him, basking in the lightness and heat of the emotions.

The two men have sat in silence for a long while, simply being in each other's presences providing the perfect amount of conversation. At some point, Hannibal realizes that he has finished his coffee. He glances over and notices Will's mug is similarly empty. He offers to refill the mugs, and heads to the kitchen when Will accepts. As the second round of coffee is brewing, he heads back to the living room to find Will digging into the fruit, yogurt and granola. When the younger man notices him, he makes an apologetic noise around the spoon.

"I'm sorry, I forgot to make something for myself and I grabbed this- I'm sorry," he finishes sheepishly, putting down the bowl and spoon.

“No need to apologize, Will, I am finished. You can have the toast as well,” Hannibal offers. Will immediately picks the bowl back up and shoves another spoonful in his mouth. Hannibal thinks the sight is adorable, but-

“Why didn’t you make anything for yourself?” Hannibal asks. He knows he shouldn’t and he has no reason to, but guilt makes his way into his mind. Will spent all this time making him a wonderful breakfast, and didn’t make anything for himself? A breakfast that Hannibal couldn't even finish? He should have eaten it all, he should have forced himself to swallow every last bite, even if it had made him sick-

“I was planning on making a sandwich after more coffee, but I got peckish I guess,” Will’s voice interrupts Hannibal's runaway train of thought. “My fault for not cooking extra.” He shrugs his shoulders, indicating it’s not a big deal. However, some stress must have made its way onto Hannibal’s face, because Will’s next statements hold concern and authority.

“I made breakfast for you Hannibal, so you would have something to eat. Something you might want to eat, and it didn’t matter that you only ate one thing. I appreciate you letting me have the rest.” Will scrapes the bowl to get the last of the yogurt before standing up. He hands the bowl and spoon to Hannibal. “If it makes you feel any better, I think the yogurt was about three days old, so I got it out of your fridge. I imagine acidic tang isn’t your favorite flavor.”

Hannibal grins at the joke, letting his chest loosen. He takes the bowl and goes back to the kitchen. He resists the urge to immediately clean the bowl, instead placing it next to the sink. He turns his body away, making sure the sink is out of his line of sight as he finishes preparing the coffee. He makes the mugs in the same way as before- cream and sugar for him, black for Will- and makes his way back to the living room once more.

Will is now attacking the toast, ripping it into pieces. Hannibal sees that he eats the pieces the same way each time: starting in the center, then moving towards the crust. The crust lays on the plate until the middle of the piece has been consumed; only then does he eat the edges. Will notices Hannibal noticing and dips his head.

“It’s almost like a routine. Certain foods have to be eaten a certain way-” he stops himself mid sentence. Will briefly makes eye contact with Hannibal before going back to his toast. “I actually feel I don’t have to explain this to you.”

Hannibal nods and lets the steam from the coffee warm his face.

“No, dear Will,” he responds. “You don’t have to explain yourself to me.”

chapter 15

Chapter Summary

will gets his lunch; things are progressing.

Chapter Notes

CW: descriptions of violence, death

Hello, everyone! I know this chapter is short, but I have... plans for the next few :) I am sending out my love to y'all

After breakfast is done, Will sticks to his earlier words and makes himself a sandwich. Hannibal tries to dissuade him, telling him he's done too much, but Will offers the compromise of Hannibal doing the dishes and cleanup of breakfast. The older man accepts this with a soft smile.

Out of the corner of his eye, Will watches Hannibal clean. He slowly picks up on the doctor's dishwashing habits (it feels strange to focus on something so mundane for a man who is anything *but* mundane; however, Will is intent on absorbing every detail- nothing is insignificant). The plates are washed outside-in, while the bowls are cleaned starting from the center. The silverware is done individually. On particularly difficult days and even some that are just slightly bothersome, Will fills a bowl up with soapy water and lets things soak. It's mesmerizing to witness such care being put into the task. Will finishes constructing his sandwich and goes into the cabinets for a glass. When he turns around to go to the sink for tap water, he sees that Hannibal has already poured him a glass. Will smiles at him appreciatively, and Hannibal sends him one back.

"Do I know?" It's a leading, bold question that Will knows is on the edge of potential danger. Hannibal stops his washing and sets down the plate he had been working on. The doctor turns to face Will, his expression carefully blank.

“Do you know what?” Hannibal asks. Will lifts the plate and attempts to arrange his face in what he hopes is a genuine, questioning face. No fear, no hesitation.

Hannibal’s eyebrows raise in understanding.

“A tiresome pig,” he tells Will bluntly, his eyes off to the right of Will’s head unseeing.

“Tiresome?” Will pokes further. He wants to know.

“Frequently annoying… very loud in his tiresome oinking,” Hannibal says slowly. “Found him down by the police station about two weeks ago.”

Will hums flatly, but he gets the message. At a crime scene just a few days before Will’s hospitalization, there was a police officer who had been particularly rude to Beverly. The rudeness turned to stalking, when she came in the following day saying he had followed her home, then left. That morning, however, he was nowhere to be found.

“Well, his squealing has ceased. I wonder if the silence will taste satisfactory,” Will says after a moment of heavy silence. Hannibal’s lips quirk up and he turns back to the last of the dishes.

Will decides to have his meal at the kitchen island; he wants to be close to Hannibal and feel his presence as he eats the spoils of his hunt. When he takes the first bite, a sudden flash sparks before his eyes, and he can see -

- Pleading, on the ground , hurt but not dead, still salvageable. It’s pitiful, in the pathetic way most people adhere to in their final moments. There’s a rush, an addictive adrenaline the final killing blow causes as the officer’s neck is snapped.

It’s a clean kill, although there are some blood splatters on the ground. No matter. It is the killer’s house. He will clean it when he is done -

- Will is swallowing the meat before realizing he has not tasted the food. Nevertheless, he has tasted the experience and feeling of the butcher. It is as filling as the meal.

*****

Once Hannibal finishes the dishes, he sits across the island from Will. They don't make conversation. It is unnecessary. The older man simply watches Will eat, memorizing the way he eats: the movement of his mouth and his hands, the enjoyment and subtle understanding in his eyes of what (who) he is consuming- even the way his throat swallows completely steals all of Hannibal's attention. This man has captivated him.

As Will takes the last bite of the sandwich, he makes eye contact with Hannibal. It has been fleeting the whole meal, but now, their eyes cling to each other. Will swallows, tipping his head back theatrically. The movement of his Adam's apple causes Hannibal's breath to stall. Will brings his eyes back down to meet the older man's stare. There's nothing in the world except them. An offering has been made by the worshiper, and the god has accepted.

"Was it satisfactory?" Hannibal asks hoarsely. His vocal cords are unable to function fully. Will's pupils dilate.

"Extremely," Will replies breathlessly. The air lays thick over the two men. Hannibal has the urge to throw the plate to the ground and climb over the island. Will appears to be having similar thoughts.

"Perhaps there could be an even more satisfactory service," Hannibal whispers softly. The former FBI profiler's face flushes a deep red.

"I think- I think I would like to try that service… Dr. Lecter," Will answers, voice dropping an octave. Hannibal is unable to stop the feral grin that comes across his face. Will returns the expression with equal vigor.

chapter 16

Chapter Summary

they head up to the bedroom. (both POVs, as a treat)

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone- so things are heating up here, and I want to take my time with this scene, so I am splitting it up a little. I know it's short, but I hope you enjoy this chapter and are excited about what's to come! (I was kicking my feet and giggling the whole time, I cannot lie)

Sending my love to y'all :)

The walk to the bedroom is torturous, seemingly taking several hours even though the two men rushed up the stairs in a few seconds. Once they reach Hannibal's bedroom, the door slamming loudly in the silence. Well, silence isn't telling the truth. Their quick breaths seem to echo off the walls. Hannibal doesn't know where to look; his eyes jump from Will's eyes (piercing, not just shining blue irises, but the emotion that's reaching out and grasping his heart and threatening to rip it out of his chest) to his hair (perpetually curly, messy, begging for Hannibal's hands to tug and mess up even further) to his chest (where his heart must be beating as erratically as Hannibal's, judging from the heaving breaths he is taking).

Hannibal makes the first move. It is surprising to himself, as he moves- no, stalks towards Will.

When they are mere inches apart, Hannibal gets the pleasure of watching Will's pupils overtake the blue of his irises. He lifts a hand to the younger man's stubbled cheek, that easy pleasure turning into something primal as Will leans his head into his hand. Without breaking eye contact, Will turns his lips towards Hannibal's palm and brushes them lightly against the doctor's skin. All of a sudden, Hannibal doesn't know if his feet are on the floor or if he's even in his bedroom. He could be in the middle of the forest, surrounded by wolves and winter- Will's touch consumes every sense he has.

*****

As Will grazes his lips on Hannibal's hand, he enjoys the sight of the doctor's overwhelmingly burning gaze. He doesn't look away. He lets Hannibal take hold of his stare.

Will has seen people's skin be turned into angel wings; he's watched as FBI forensics have dug up bodies being used as food for a mushroom garden. Yet none of those have been as intense as having Hannibal Lecter's full attention.

Will finally pulls his eyes away from Hannibal's as he focuses his attention to the hand cradling his face. He closes his eyes and presses his forehead against the older man's fingers. He feels them touch his temple, run down the side of his jaw and land on the underside of his chin. The sensation almost makes Will's knees give out. They haven't had sex, they haven't even kissed yet, but this moment fuels Will's burning desire to be Hannibal's and Hannibal's alone.

Since Will's eyes are closed, his sense of touch is heightened. When Hannibal's other hand comes up to touch his other cheek, Will lets out an audible sigh. It's involuntary, and a little embarrassing. All embarrassment leaves him the moment Hannibal's fingertips touch his lips, his other hand still under his chin. For a moment, the fingers on his lips stay still. The anticipation of movement is sending Will's nerves into overdrive. He normally hates that. Now he's craving it.

Finally, after too long (probably only a few seconds, but those seconds felt stretched into days for Will), Hannibal's fingers begin to stroke his lips. The pressure is light at first, teasing, searching, hesitant. Will feels his sanity slipping. He wants more, he *needs* more.

So when Hannibal's fingers part his lips, Will lets some of the desire pour over. He takes two of the psychiatrist's fingers and runs his tongue along the skin. He feels Hannibal's hot breath hit his face, hears the shaky gasp he lets out. It spurs Will into action. Instinct (primal, dark, enchanting) takes over and he bites.

chapter 17

Chapter Summary

things heat up, slow down, that crank up even hotter.

Chapter Notes

cw: blood play (I'm going to call it that because there's some stuff with blood because this is Hannigram we're talking about here)

I present to you- a longer chapter! I know the last one was pretty short, but I hope this satisfies y'all more :) the next one will be actual smut, don't worry, but I wanted to build it up more (because it felt right)

I am sending my love to y'all

There is a burgeoning desire to drop to his knees and forget his dignity, but Hannibal manages to stay upright as Will’s teeth press into his fingers. The doctor lets out a groan, one that comes deep in his body, perhaps somewhere in his stomach or his soul.

Will takes the noise as a sign to increase the pressure. Hannibal feels the other man’s teeth on his bone, and he identifies the moment his skin breaks. Due to the sensitivity of his nose, the tangy scent of blood hits him immediately. It activates every neuron and synapses in his brain, making him aware of every sense in his body acutely.

Hannibal rips his fingers from Will’s mouth, and for a moment, his stomach sinks at the sight of disappointment in Will’s eyes. *That won’t do* , Hannibal thought.

Hannibal brings his bloody fingers up to his own lips. He carefully rubs the blood onto his lips. He watches with glee as he sees the blue of Will’s eyes be swallowed by the black of his pupils. Just as Hannibal is about to slip his fingers into his mouth, Will’s own lips crush his in a bruising kiss.

There's a low moaning sound that most likely comes from the both of them. It doesn't matter; Hannibal isn't registering sound. All senses are focused on *feeling* . The blood on Hannibal's lips softens the rough edges of Will's chapped skin. Will's tongue breaches his parted lips, looking to taste the blood and saliva of the older man. Any blood left in Hannibal's head is snowballing down his body.

The moment stretches and snaps; every time Will's lips meet Hannibal's time marches on, fleeing the minds of the two men. When oxygen is necessary, when they are forced to part even a millimeter, that time separated is too long.

Hannibal's legs hit the edge of his bed and he falls back in surprise- he hadn't even realized they had moved. He moves to get up, but Will places a strong hand on his chest that forces him to stay on his back. Hannibal stares up at the man with unfiltered lust and adoration. Will stares back with a mirrored expression.

Hannibal notices that Will's lips are smeared with his blood, like lipstick printed on his skin. However, this marks Will with something only Hannibal can provide. Will grins down at him, white glaring through sanguine, and Hannibal is unable to stop himself.

"I love you," he says. His voice is shaking, he can't find stable ground. He can't move from his spot on the bed, and he doesn't want to as Will takes a sharp inhale and leans over him.

"Say it again," Will murmurs, inches from Hannibal's face. The doctor can smell the blood, the sweat, the natural musk from Will which makes the words all too easy to repeat.

"I love you, Will," Hannibal says, stronger this time. He raises his hands to Will's cheeks and brings their foreheads together. "My dear Will."

"Hannibal," Will grunts out in a strangled voice. "Hannibal, I-" The younger man stops himself, wanting to continue, but something holds him back. He looks frustrated. Hannibal can't have that.

"I know, Will," Hannibal coos, petting Will's hair in a steady rhythm with one hand while cradling his face with the other. His curls are rougher than they look, but the texture feels rich

and real under his fingers. “You don’t have to say it.”

“I want to,” Will insists. He shifts his weight so his forearms are caging in the psychiatrist’s upper body. Their lower halves are tangled together, the touch so connected Hannibal can’t tell whose legs are whose. Will’s body imprisons him and protects him simultaneously. The act should be suffocating; it feels safe.

“I know; But I can wait. I’m incredibly patient,” Hannibal quips lightly. That gets a small chuckle from Will. He looks back at Hannibal with eyes that are saying everything words cannot.

“I should be able to,” Will says quietly. He shifts his weight yet again, this time moving so he’s sitting back, straddling the doctor’s lap. Hannibal is forced to pull his hands away, but the view of Will sitting over him combined with the weight of him more than makes up for it.

“Love has been scarce in both of our lives,” Hannibal remarks. “I wondered sometimes… if there are people who are destined to be unlovable. And if perhaps I was one of those people. I know what I do condemns me to being the Devil in other people’s eyes. Something inhumane” Hannibal has to look away from Will at this moment, suddenly feeling a profound sense of vulnerability. A soft pattern of caresses is given to him on his cheek, which spurs him on.

“Even through all of this, I held onto a dangerously human condition which may have been my downfall: having hope. Hoping that there was someone who could- understand me; not only with my ways and my practices, but all the small things. Things that tear apart even normal relationships. I knew I had the capacity for love. My sister is proof of that. I simply never knew if it would come again, the opportunity to love as completely and deeply as I do.” The touches slow until Will is simply pressing his hand to Hannibal’s cheek, using one finger to stroke along the high cheekbone. He wipes away a tear that has fallen during the speech.

“You came into my life, and no matter how I tried to push you away, or distract myself, you did not fade from my mind. My interest never waned. I became obsessed with your Becoming, and my benign curiosity turned sour- it nearly ruined you. You,” Hannibal sits up at this point, using his palms to prop himself up to be closer to Will’s face. “Every event in my life I now treasure, because it has led me here. I can reach out and hold you. Touch your skin. Feel your breath on my face. Sometimes I fear…”

Will stares at him with bated breath, eyes wide in anticipation.

“Sometimes I fear I need to eat you,” Hannibal whispers. “To make sure you are real, and that you are revered in the way you are meant to be.”

For a moment, Will’s expression is unreadable, frozen in shock and awe. Hannibal is afraid it is a mask, and that this is the last straw.

Instead, Will pushes Hannibal back down onto the mattress. He leans back over him, his forearms barring him once more. The younger man’s lips hover next to Hannibal’s ear.

“You have made me sacred already, Hannibal. I am here, holy in your eyes.” Hannibal feels like his skin is on fire, and abruptly feels trapped in his clothes. “If you wish to consume me, there are other ways of doing so.”

Will leans back again, but this time, he starts on his clothes. He had been wearing the pajama set that Hannibal had bought on a whim while thinking of Will. The man in question makes quick work of the shirt, pulling it over his head with a frantic energy- he doesn’t even bother with the buttons. Hannibal gets the message, and starts on the buttons of his own shirt. The pajamas Hannibal wears are identical to Will’s, sans the color. His set is maroon.

Apparently, Will shares Hannibal’s impatience to get things started, because he rips the older man’s hands away from the buttons and yanks the shirt up from the waist. Hannibal shifts, making it easier for the clothing to come off. They are both shirtless now, and the doctor finally gets the time to appreciate the physique of the other man. As much as his mind and demeanor captivates him, his physical beauty draws him in just as much.

Hannibal can see the shot wound on his shoulder, scar tissue blemishing the smooth skin. His arms are defined, but not overly so. His torso is similar, although his stomach holds the barest softness of age. The sight takes Hannibal’s breath, but the next movement of Will’s gets him going again.

The former profiler is fiddling with the waistband of his pants, pulling them down to reveal a simple pair of black boxers. The front of them divulge the… girth of Will's excitement. Hannibal's mouth is simultaneously bone dry and about to drool.

Will sees Hannibal looking and smiles down at him. The dried blood still stands out, a perfect frame for his teeth.

"I think it's time we begin the service you mentioned earlier, Doctor."

chapter 18

Chapter Summary

will gives hannibal the love he needs.

Chapter Notes

cw: smut, anxiety

Hey everyone! I just wanted to let you know that this is the first smut I've ever written. I hope it's okay, I hope it's not too rough. Near the end of the chapter, Will has a small panic attack, but it doesn't last long.

Sending my love to y'all.

Will can taste the desire in the air. He finishes taking off his pajama bottoms and starts taking off Hannibal’s. The older man lets him do as he pleases, eye wide in anticipation.

Will expects to find silk boxers or perhaps even lace underwear (the mental picture is almost too much at the moment, but he can dream). What he finds is much better.

“Commando, Doctor Lecter? Would have thought you would splurge on something so intimate,” Will teases. Hannibal’s face blooms red.

“I normally wear boxers, but I felt… unmotivated to put them on,” Hannibal admits, voice shaking ever so slightly. Will realizes he is embarrassed. That’s the last thing he wants.

“You came prepared,” Will says. He doesn’t know if that alleviates any internal pressure in Hannibal, but the other man does smile gratefully up at him.

Will wants to take this slow, to take his time with Hannibal. He can't scare him, not when they finally are completely open to each other. They've taken to the cliff's edge and have jumped; now, they just have to survive the fall.

The younger man places his fingertips on Hannibal's chest. It's covered in a layer of coarse hair- something Will has never really found attractive. Now, he runs his fingers over it, cherishing the rough texture on his skin. He leisurely moves down to the ribs, going over each ridge with a fragile brush. He both feels and sees Hannibal's chest moving up and down, the breaths getting shallower and hitched the lower Will's hands go.

They're not saying anything, and there's little eye contact. Will knows it isn't necessary. Unlike past partners, who had demanded eye contact and fast, rough fucks, Will knows that the care and communication with Hannibal integrates the necessary feeling of safety and love needed to take the next steps. He intends to honor this.

When Will's hands come to Hannibal's stomach, he feels the muscle twitch. For a second, Will thinks it's an involuntary action, but then he realizes that the psychiatrist is sucking in. Will's heart drops a little. He removes his hands and places them on the doctor's cheeks.

"Please don't be embarrassed," Will whispers. Hannibal shuts his eyes briefly, tightly, before opening them to meet Will's. He doesn't appear scared, per se, but there's hesitancy in his gaze. Will wants to rip it from his mind. Any ounce of self-consciousness should have no room here. He wants Hannibal to feel safe. To feel loved.

"I love your body," Will says gently. His hands begin their journey downwards again, mapping out the different textures of his skin with reverence. When they reach the older man's stomach, Will keeps going. They'll discuss it another time, when they're both more prepared for that conversation. Right now, Will's motivation is to be with Hannibal, in a way that makes him forget every ounce of self he has.

Will takes Hannibal's cock in his hands. He keeps his grip light, but it's enough to experience the weight of it in his hand. He knew he would be large, but the girth of it was surprising as well. He starts stroking, first going slow, keeping the pace even. He takes in the sight of Hannibal panting, unable to keep small moans from escaping.

Will's own cock has been half hard this entire time, but seeing the doctor descend into pleasure makes the fabric of his boxers rub uncomfortably against his penis. The pace of his strokes pick up, becoming faster and sloppier. Will feels his skin prickle with sweat, and sees perspiration pepper Hannibal's skin as well. His boxers all of a sudden become too tight, too much. He rips his hands from Hannibal and forcefully yanks the clothing off. Hannibal whines loudly at the loss, but looks appreciatively at Will's cock.

Will immediately goes back to his task, stroking hard and fast. He sees precum already leaking from the tip of his cock. Will knows that he probably won't be far behind, and he finds he wants to wait. He strokes one more time then puts his hands on the doctor's hips.

"Will, please," Hannibal pleads. His voice is at the highest octave Will has heard come from him, and it goes straight to his cock. He wants to hear it more. It's so tempting to finish him, to watch Hannibal's orgasm provide him bliss and release, but Will already knows he wants to stretch this out for as long as he can. He grips Hannibal's hips tighter.

"I know, Hannibal," Will says comfortingly. The younger man's brain takes a minute to make a decision. It's been a while since he's had sex, doing nothing but jerk off every so often. He settles on a thought a moment later.

He squeezes Hannibal's sides once and pulls his hands away. He pushes off the bed and kneels in front of Hannibal's legs. He spreads the psychiatrist's legs. He hears Hannibal's breath hitch and the covers rustle. He's sitting up. Will looks up and sees Hannibal staring down at him, hair falling over his eyes, face flushing, lips painted red, pupils swallowing all color in his eyes. It's too much for him to witness, this undone picture all for him, so he presses his lips to Hannibal's inner thigh. The skin is soft and smells faintly of lavender and sweat and blood. It activates every neuron in his body and Will gives into biting again. It sounds miles away, but he hears Hannibal's small yelp followed by a moan. It urges Will on, and he sucks a dark bruise on the pale skin.

Will leaves a trail of these bruises, taking his time before reaching neatly trimmed pubic hair. All the while, Hannibal switches between English and Lithuanian, giving broken praises and pleading. Will keeps his hands like shackles around Hannibal's ankles. He glances up, wanting to make sure that this next step will be welcome.

"May I, uh-" Will stumbles, suddenly feeling strange. Sex isn't weird for him, but he doesn't have too much experience with men. A couple of rough hand jobs and one half blow job (the

guy left half hard, claiming it was “too gay even if he wasn’t the guy with the dick down his throat”) hasn’t given Will a lot of confidence in this area.

Hannibal gives him a reassuring smile.

“If you are asking me if you can give me a blowjob, Will, then the answer is yes,” Hannibal says, voice scratchy from use. Will chuckles, feeling light. He refocuses his attention to Hannibal cock, which is fully hard. It looks almost painful, so Will decides to just go for it.

He licks the head a couple of times, tasting the bitterness of precum. He’s building up his courage; he takes the head in his mouth, cherishing the weight on his tongue. He tries to think of all the things he’s remembered about giving blowjobs- no teeth (although he might have to explore that later with Hannibal), licking, sucking, taking the whole length one at a time.

He trusts his instincts, letting Hannibal slide his cock slowly down his throat. Not quite fucking his throat, but allowing Will to take the length down. He presses his tongue to the underside of the cock, closing his eyes in a moment of overpowering emotion. He was so focused on not choking that he didn’t even feel Hannibal’s hands come in his hair. He is lost in the moment, and has to take one of his hands off the other man’s ankles and start stroking his own cock.

The bedroom is filled with a symphony of praises and moans. Will’s jaw is aching, his eyes filling with tears from the effort of sucking and holding his mouth open, but a burning heat is boiling in his lower stomach. He’s close, too close. He wants Hannibal to finish first. He redoubles his efforts, relishing the way the head of Hannibal’s cock hits the back of his throat. He hollows out his cheeks and digs his nails into Hannibal’s ankles.

He knows the moment Hannibal’s orgasm overtakes him. He lets out a string of Lithuanian and Will struggles to hold his cock in his mouth as he feels cum rush down his throat. He-he can’t breathe, he has to-

He pulls off Hannibal’s cock, coughing, cum dribbling down his chin. His jaw hangs open, saliva and cum spilling out. It’s most likely mixing with the dried blood, which will probably stain the carpet on the floor. He can faintly hear Hannibal coming down from his high. He knows that his dick is still hard, probably leaking all over the carpet along with whatever is

coming out of his mouth, but he's not focusing on that. He tries to catch his breath, but he can't stop coughing. His mind starts to race.

What if it wasn't good enough? What if he did something wrong? What if it was good, but down the line, Hannibal gets bored? What if he never learns how to do it right? What if-

"Will? Will, mylimasis, can you look at me? Will?"

Will's vision is fuzzy, but Hannibal's face comes into sharp focus. He realizes that Hannibal has come down to the floor and sat next to him, not quite in his space but still very near. His eyes are filled with worry and it makes Will's stomach turn. He has failed.

"I'm sorry," he croaks. His throat feels raw and his tears are falling hot and fast. It had been going so well up until the moment it wasn't. Hannibal coos and places his large hand on his.

"Dear Will, you were…" Hannibal takes a deep inhale. His eyes go misty. "You were *divine* ."

Even with the mess covering the lower half of his face, his softening cock, the tears clouding his vision, he feels sacred in Hannibal's eyes. He is conscious of the weight of the words Hannibal was saying and what he was admitting to him.

It felt worshipful. The act of taking Hannibal, letting him expose himself and be touched. Gods aren't touched, but Will was able to taste an offering from the divine. Their roles switch often, who is God and Devil, beast and man, but tonight, Will was able to bring sanctity to his earth. Even if it was too much at the end, he felt- he *feels* loved.

"I… I'm glad," Will huffs out. He finally looks Hannibal in the face and sees nothing but adoration. He lets Hannibal's hands cup his face, and brings Will in for a kiss. Their lips are covered with spit, dried blood, and cum, but the touch is gentle. They pull apart and the stickiness nearly stops Will from pulling away. Hannibal takes his time getting up, giving Will time to continue to come himself. The doctor offers a hand and Will takes it. He is pulled up into strong arms. He buries his face into the crook of Hannibal's neck and lets himself cry. It's not sad, nor is it completely happy. It's a release.

chapter 19

Chapter Summary

hannibal bathes will

Chapter Notes

no real content warnings for this one, but will is nonverbal for the majority.

Hello, everyone! Unfortunately, this is a rather short chapter, but I think it's very sweet. I'm working on how to structure the story moving forward- but we're probably about halfway done! I hope you guys are enjoying reading this as much as I've been writing this.

I send my love to y'all.

Hannibal leads Will to the bathroom. He’s half-carrying the younger man, who appears to be having difficulty walking on his own after their activities. Hannibal couldn’t care less. He would carry Will, over his shoulder, bridal style, legs around his waist for miles if he had to. Luckily, tonight, the trip is short; once they are in the bathroom, Hannibal deposits Will carefully onto the closed toilet seat and begins to prepare a bath.

Hannibal himself is still a little shaky himself, but he is able to gather bath materials from his shelves. He takes a lavender scented bubble bath and a rosemary bath oil, both scents light enough not to bother Hannibal’s sensitive nose. He grabs a loofah from a second shelf, along with a soft jasmine body wash. He doesn’t grab any shampoo, knowing that washing hair can cause discomfort when someone is already overstimulated.

He lines the products along the bathroom sink and turns his attention back to Will. The man is hunched over, his hands clasped over his ears, rocking slightly. His expression is blank. Hannibal knows that touching him is probably a bad idea so he kneels down in front of him, slow in his descent. He doesn’t try to make eye contact, but he does point his gaze at Will’s forehead.

“Hello, dear Will,” Hannibal whispers. “Are you ready to go in?” He doesn’t expect a verbal answer. Will stops rocking and gives a small nod. Hannibal nods in return and stands back up. He holds out a hand for Will. The other man shakes his head.

Instead of physically assisting him, Hannibal supervises Will as he uses the uncluttered edge of the sink to walk over to the bathtub. The tub itself is ornate, and large enough for two. Hannibal won’t go in just yet though. He wants to focus on Will. He aches to reach out and help the man into the tub, but Hannibal wants to respect Will’s space. He keeps his eyes trained on Will as he shakily climbs into the tub, and he is conscious enough to not splash water onto the ground (something Hannibal appreciates, even though he wouldn’t mind cleaning it up). The ex-profiler exhales sharply and closes his eyes as he settles into the water. The doctor goes to a rack by the sink and takes a couple of towels and lays them next to the tub; he leaves one towel on the rack for Will. Hannibal then goes back to the sink, grabs a bar of unscented soap and a washcloth, and kneels next to the tub. The other products he brought out would be for him.

“Would it be alright for me to wash you?” Hannibal asks gently. Will doesn’t answer for a moment, staying perfectly still, until he gives a sharp nod of consent. Hannibal dips the washcloth into the hot bathwater (not warm, *hot* . Hannibal is pulling from his own experience, but lukewarm water tends to feel oddly solid when he is submerged in a tub. It’s terribly uncomfortable, and the hot water looks as if it is agreeable for Will). He scrubs the soap bar gently on the fabric.

“I think it would be best for you to keep your eyes closed,” Hannibal says. Will nods once. Hannibal reaches forward and begins cleaning the other man’s face. He takes his time around the mouth, which is covered in a mess of dried blood, sweat, saliva, and cum. Hannibal feels the mess on his own face, but his attention is on his love. Will’s beard is covering some of the mess, so Hannibal cleans there first. He goes to the sink after the first round of cleaning, fills up a small bowl with water, and goes back to the tub’s side. He cleans the cloth, wrings it out, and dips it back in the tub’s water. Will hasn’t moved, barely twitching an eyelid due to Hannibal’s ministrations.

The process takes a while, about 45 minutes- maybe closer to an hour. Hannibal is thorough. He takes the time to reach all the far reaches of Will’s body- the scars, the underside of his knees, his armpits, the inside of his elbows, his belly button, between his toes and the soles of his feet. Hannibal’s mind is clear. His memory palace is quiet, its hallways void of memories that might escape from behind closed doors. It’s not often that his consciousness is in this state, and Hannibal is soaking in its silence.

Every so often, Hannibal glances up at Will's face. Almost as if to check that he's still there. Even though he is tending to his body, Hannibal feels if he cannot see Will's face, that this body is just a body. Whenever he looks up, Will's eyes are closed. However, occasionally Hannibal can feel the other man's gaze burning into his skin. It's akin to the warmth of the sun.

As Hannibal finishes working on Will's feet, he notices Will getting restless. His fingers tap in patterns against the tub and he is constantly switching his head's position. Hannibal takes the cloth away and places it in the bowl.

"I've finished. Would you like a shower?" Hannibal asks. Will's eyes peek open. They're looking far away, even though they're pointed at Hannibal.

"No," Will answers hoarsely. He winces, most likely not expecting himself to be verbal. Hannibal hums in assent and offers a hand to help Will out of the tub. This time, Will takes it. Well, he grips his hands on Hannibal's forearm and allows Hannibal to maneuver him out of the water. He takes the fresh towel from a rack near the sink and hands it to Will. He so desperately wants to wrap him up tight and hold him, but that's not what he needs at the moment.

"Would you like me to leave?" Hannibal asks. Will hugs the towel around himself and looks up at Hannibal. This time, his eyes are clear.

"Stay."

chapter 20

Chapter Summary

hannibal comes down from the earlier excitement

Chapter Notes

cw: description of OCD tendencies and dissociation

Hello, everyone! This is a quick chapter from Hannibal's POV, and is bittersweet. Next few ones I'm planning on getting into the more 'murder' side of the murder husbands.

I send my love to y'all.

Translation: Ne aš nenoriu- No, I don’t want to
Tai yra gerai. Ačiū- This is fine, thank you

Hannibal abandons his bath products and opts to take a quick shower. He scrubs away the top layers of the grime, but doesn’t quite get to the prickling, static dirt that only exists in his mind. That can take several minutes, even hours to get rid of. He’ll have to put it off.

He steps out of the shower and finds Will, still wrapped in the towel, seated on the toilet seat. His head is resting on his chin. There is much more of a presence in his stare and his stance, as if he’s simply bored and daydreaming, not paralyzed by hallucinations. Hannibal takes a moment to dry himself off thoroughly with another fresh towel and goes for his robe, which hangs off the back of the bathroom door. He slips it over his shoulders and settles into the silkiness of the fabric. It’s a simple black color, but has roses and thorns etched in its skin.

Will shakes his head a little and looks up at Hannibal, smiling a little. He then glances back at the products on the sink and frowns.

“Are you not going to take a bath too?” He asks. Hannibal shrugs. He tries to focus more on the feeling of the fabric and not on the uncleanliness he *knows* is on his skin.

“I’ll take one later- I don’t need one at the moment,” Hannibal answers, making sure to keep his voice level. Will’s frown deepens and he stands.

“Hannibal, be honest with me.” Will’s voice is firm, nudging what little guilt Hannibal has in him. “Do you want a bath?”

For a second, Hannibal can’t think of anything to say. Then, he thinks of too many things to say- excuses, sorries, overlong explanations- but he isn’t able to get any of them out. His hands start to get that feeling- there’s an itch under the skin, down to his nerves, that he can’t get out. He begins fidgeting with the ends of his sleeves. He glances over at the tub, and suddenly the idea of having to go through a whole routine of bathing sounds disgusting. Exhausting. Just awful.

“No,” Hannibal mumbles. “Ne aš nenoriu, ne, no, no…” His voice trails off, not even fully registering the switch in language.

“Okay,” Will says softly. It’s he who holds out a hand to Hannibal this time. The older man takes it immediately.

Will gently pulls them back into the bedroom. He guides Hannibal over to the bed and watches him sit down on the side where he normally sleeps. Will then goes over to one of the three dressers in his room and opens a drawer, presumably looking for clothes. Like many things he does, Will’s actions of rudeness and forwardness in his home are the exception, as Hannibal both cares about him too much to punish him further and is not in the right state of mind to chastise him. Hannibal observes Will as though he is watching him through a piece of smudged glass; he can see him there, and Hannibal knows that he’s watching him and that he’s not totally dissociating, but there’s a disconnect that prevents him from fully being in the moment.

Will manages to scrounge together a blue knitted sweater (identical to the red knitted sweater he wears, he has many in different colors) and a pair of black lounge pants, along with a plain black pair of boxers. He places them next to Hannibal.

“I couldn’t really find a T-shirt, so… I don’t-”

“Tai yra gerai, ačiū,” Hannibal says, his voice still distant. He doesn’t register his Lithuanian. Will's eyes flash with confusion, but he steps back.

“I’m going to go to the guest room and get some clothes on; I’ll be back soon,” Will says. Hannibal nods slowly. Will considers this movement for a moment before going to change.

Hannibal mechanically begins dressing himself. He puts on the sweater, feeling the knitted material scrape against his dry skin. He normally moisturizes after every time he washes himself, but he had not even given it a thought today. He goes to stand up to put on the boxers, but his legs don’t seem to want to ground themselves enough to support him. Instead, he drags himself back on the mattress and puts on the boxers laying down. By the time they’re all the way on his hips, he can’t even sit up. He hates surrendering to this spaced out feeling, but he doesn’t have the energy to resist it. He stares at the ceiling, waiting for the moment he leaves his body and dissociates completely.

The dissociation never comes. The mattress dips beside him and Hannibal finds the strength to turn his head to find Will lying on his side facing him. He’s wearing a dark green Henley and a pair of black boxers, the same ones as Hannibal. The younger man smiles, small but true. Hannibal can’t move his mouth to return the expression. He can’t move anything.

“Can I touch you?” Will breathes. “Blink once no, blink twice yes.” Hannibal blinks twice almost immediately.

Will reaches out and lands his fingertips lightly on his cheek. He runs them along Hannibal’s cheekbone before carding through his hair. Hannibal’s eyes close on their own volition, lost in the grounding of Will’s touch.

Often, Hannibal feels like God. High above everything around him, constantly surveying from his throne. Most of the time, this is his choice, the steps to divine heights he has built himself over the years. However, he’ll get stuck. There’s times when he isn’t able to come down.

Will pulls him down. Will is able to lead him down from his heightened states to be on earth, where he can hurt him, love him, touch him, be curious about him. No one, not even Mischa,

has ever been able to get him to stay in the present.

Will is essentially petting him now, and Hannibal lets the sensation consume everything bad and distant in his mind.

chapter 21

Chapter Summary

a little bit of freak will graham time featuring hannibal's murder dungeon

Chapter Notes

cw: masturbation, vague descriptions of violence/death

Note: I don’t remember where the entrance to Hannibal’s basement is, so I’m making it up. But it’s still dungeon-y and stuff, so that counts.

Also, I present to you: a table scene slightly based off Barry Keoghan solo scenes in Saltburn. If you know, you know. Not the same thing, but I was thinking about it while writing it. Just... freaky times in a freaky way.

I send my love to y'all.

Will watches Hannibal fall asleep. He makes sure his breathing evens out and his eyes stay shut before shifting into a sitting position. He pulls his knees to his chest and rests his head there. He wraps his arms around his shins and tries not to think too hard about anything.

Whenever Will goes nonverbal, for any length of time, taking care of others is impossible. His empathy won’t shut off, but every other virtue will not be present. He usually isn’t within himself when he can’t speak.

Yet when he saw Hannibal’s agitation after his shower, he felt an unknown tug in his heart. He set aside his own discomfort in order to help someone who was arguably doing worse. He was able to bring Hannibal to a state of rest; normally he brings people to a state of agitation.

Will doesn’t have a lot of experience with relationships of any kind. His experience with sex has been largely experimental and more about “fear of missing out” and regulating his body rather than actually enjoying the acts he was performing (Hannibal, of course, has been the exception, and Will has a feeling he will be in all things).

Any attempt at an actual romantic and/or sexual relationship has been out of the question. Even his non-romantic relationships, such as the one with his father, had been more of an obligation. Friendships have often been fleeting.

Will's relationship with Hannibal is above all that, surpassing boundaries and morals so fast Will wonders if he had any in the first place. Maybe that is why he has been unsuccessful in his attempts at connections before this. No one was able to stare at the darkness in his heart and stand it.

Hannibal embraces that darkness. He mirrors it, perhaps with a greater intensity than Will has in himself. He wants to cultivate the shadows inside Will and bring them out into the light, where their pronounced darkness will be brighter than the sun. He will be glorified, though perhaps not in holiness.

Hannibal has granted him a sacred place, more sacred than any church or mosque or temple. No god lives in this house, but there is worship here. Will wonders if any of his ancestors, from any branch of his long dead family tree, are disgusted by the actions of their last living seed. He finds, as he looks down at Hannibal's sleeping face, that he doesn't care.

Will slowly moves his body over the side of the mattress, doing his best to do the least amount of disturbance as he can. He stands up and goes to the bedroom door. He glances back, confirming that Hannibal is still asleep. He goes out of the room and shuts the door softly behind him.

Will heads downstairs, regretting with each step that he didn't grab any pants or socks as there is very little heat in the first floor of the house. He has no particular path in mind, nor any set destination. He simply wants to learn about Hannibal, soaking up information from different areas of his house.

He wanders through the kitchen, being mindful not to touch anything. If Hannibal has a love for anything but Will and himself, it would be cooking. At the very least, his passion cannot be undenied, even when the dishes may be made with less than savory ingredients. He observes the cleanliness of the space, taking in the minimalistic design. There are no distractions here; the star of the show is the food.

He moves into the living room next. Will goes to the bookshelves first. The books in the psychiatrist's office are based in medicine, mixed in with detailed personal journals and sketchbooks.

These are much more theatrical and personal. Will spots Italian and Lithuanian titles sandwiched between Dante, Homer, and even a few Austen novels. Will smiles at that, and imagines Hannibal curling up by the fireplace, absorbed in the dialogue of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy.

Will is hesitant to touch any of these possessions as well, knowing that Hannibal most likely has a very specific order in which he has them in. He makes a mental note to ask if he can borrow some of the titles and moves on.

He heads down a small hallway off the living room, where there's a small closet to the left. Will sees that it's been open recently, and he finds it filled to the brim with cleaning supplies. A couple of spots are empty, and Will deducts that Hannibal probably has used them within the last couple of days and hasn't yet put them away.

That'll bother him , Will thinks. Then he wonders why he knows that. He's only truly figured out Hannibal within the last day or so, and yet he is already tuned into the intricacies of the fine points of his personality. *It's probably a boundary problem* , Will concludes. It doesn't bother him as much as it should.

He closes the door, intent on finding the unshelved cleaning supplies when he notices a handle on the wall. It's at the very end of the hallway, painted the same white as the walls. It's similar to the oven handle, just this one runs vertically instead of horizontally.

Will has a feeling he knows where this leads; he knows that Hannibal will probably walk him through it, proudly displaying his tools and tables where he performs his work. Will can't wait though. Not when it's so close, when he can reach out and pull the handle to open the door.

Which he does. The light from the hallway does not extend far down the wooden staircase, limiting his vision. There is also a rush of cold air that sends goosebumps up Will's arm. This does not deter him.

He steps down the stairs, taking his time, partly due to anticipation and fear, and also due to the cold. Once he reaches the bottom, he berates himself for not bringing a flashlight before turning to the side and finding a lightswitch. He flicks it up and takes it all in.

There are chains crisscrossing from the ceiling. Unidentifiable leather pieces cover the rest of the ceiling. Glass panels, boxes and mirrors are placed around the room. Freezers are stationed in each corner. There is every kind of knife, needle, and rope lining the racks hanging on the walls. Off to the side stands a power saw. There's an open closet filled with bright white aprons. In the center of the room is a simple operating table. Everything is spotless.

Even if holiness doesn't reside in this house, Will still feels the presence of power as he makes his way towards the center table. He doesn't even realize he's doing it, not really. It's a siren song, drawing him in, to reach out and touch.

He reaches the table and lays his palms flat on its top. He feels its biting cold, the sterilized surface and feels his whole body shiver. There's an evident sense of danger in this room that Will's consciousness is either ignoring or acknowledging and… accepting.

It's the latter , he thinks immediately. *No going back now* .

His hands reach out to touch the other side of the table. His body is now bent over, his torso touching the hard surface. He lays his cheek and presses it to the metal.

The following events were something that Will couldn't control, or perhaps he didn't want to. Maybe it was himself opening up fully to what Hannibal truly is. Maybe it was simply a release of tension.

His upper body is focused on the cold, clean expanse of the table. The bend at his waist causes his cock to be pressed up against the edge. At first, it's just a pressing sensation that doesn't get a reaction out of Will. Then his mind starts to wander. He imagines it's Hannibal bending him over the table, whispering in his ear about anything and everything. He imagines the lights off, the darkness making every shape and shadow even more dangerous. He moans

involuntarily and one of his hands comes off the table and comes to his dick. He palms himself through his boxers, feeling his cock becoming harder.

He imagines Hannibal and he coming down here together, fresh off the hunt, covered in blood that is not their own. His hips buck, hitting both his hand and the table. His mind flashes through images of brutal and primal actions bringing down those who don't deserve the life they've been given. The front of his boxers is wet with precum, his cock fully hard. Harsh pants fall from his mouth, echoing off the cold walls.

Will imagines Hannibal whispering praises in his ear, holding his hand and his weapon in tandem. He can see Hannibal standing across from him at the operating table, grinning with blood-stained teeth. Hannibal stalks around the corner, coming closer to Will. He can almost feel the doctor's breath skirting the skin on his neck, a phantom hand skating down, down, down-

Will can't keep the cry that erupts from his mouth, feeling hot, sticky cum staining his boxers. He rides the high, every nerve singing with bliss before he slumps over the table. His knees nearly buckle under the sudden dead weight, but he manages to hold his lower body upright.

Will exhales, letting air fully leave his lungs for a moment. He brings himself upright, slowly, wincing at the wet feeling in his boxers. Nonetheless, he can't keep a smile from creeping onto his face.

chapter 22

Chapter Summary

hannibal and will talk about what happened in the last chapter

Chapter Notes

cw: sexual and violent themes

Hope y'all are happy with this, and I've got some plans for the next chapter :)

Sending my love to y'all.

Hannibal’s eyes flutter open. He finds himself laying across the bed, arms by his side, head turned to one side. The position itself is uncomfortable, but his mind is calm- not quiet, but memories and thoughts are not tripping over themselves to shove towards the front of his mind.

His jaw cracks as he yawns wide. He stretches his body, making him aware of the soreness in his limbs. His vertebrae pop loudly, jarring him further awake.

He shifts forward until he’s sitting up with his legs hanging off the side of the bed. He stands up and walks to the bathroom. He turns on the light and faces himself in the mirror.

There are small bags under his eyes, but they are much less pronounced than they have been over the last few days, and his skin is far less pale. The phantom itch within him has been reduced to a faint buzz, one that he has handled on a day to day basis. He knows that Will is the reason for his current state. He smiles, and the reflection looks human.

He splashes some water onto his face and brushes his teeth. While spitting out toothpaste, Hannibal’s brain has woken up enough to wonder where Will is. He cleans his face once more and goes back into his bedroom. He finds a pair of sweatpants and some thick socks.

He carefully puts his legs through the pants, his nerves unable to decide if the fabric is bothersome enough to cringe at. They decide it's not, and the buzz gets fainter. As he's slipping on the socks, Hannibal hears hurried footsteps coming down the hall. He watches Will rush into the bathroom. He spots a dark flush on the other man's cheeks and a slight stumble to his walk.

"Will, are you-" Hannibal starts to ask, but is cut off by the door of the bathroom slamming shut. He hears the nearly silent sound of clothes hitting the floor and the shower being turned on. Hannibal rushes over to the door.

"Will, are you alright?" Hannibal asks, able to state his question in full this time around. There's a beat of silence.

"Yeah, I'm fine, Hannibal," Will assures, his voice muffled by the door. Hannibal hears the shower curtain being pulled aside and assumes Will has stepped in. The doctor is hesitant to ask his next question, but he pushes it out.

"Do you need help?" Hannibal keeps his voice level, but he injects genuine concern into his words. He doesn't think anything is seriously wrong, but his senses are heightened when it comes to Will, and often his emotions are blown out of proportion.

Will hesitates again before responding.

"No, but- I'm fine Hannibal. But I-I want to talk after I'm done," Will's voice trails off, and Hannibal almost misses the end of what he had said.

"Alright," Hannibal says loudly. A small glow of panic ignites in the bottom of Hannibal's belly.

He's able to walk, so nothing can be seriously wrong, right?

You of all people know that things inside the mind can be just as serious as anything physical.

These thoughts and more build as Hannibal goes downstairs, attempting to stop the trains of thought from going off the rails. He finds himself in the kitchen and goes for the kettle on one of the stoves. He fills it with water from the sink and sets it back on a burner. He turns the knob of the stove. He's decided to make tea.

He sets out two mugs. They're both a soft beige color, hand crafted from a market Hannibal went to years ago in Florence. They're very simple, but hold the most liquid out of any mug he owns. Whenever he uses one, he's reminded of bright summer days, brilliant architecture, and beautiful people. He wants to share that feeling with Will.

He rummages around his cupboards until he finds two chamomile tea bags. He places them in the mugs. He then goes to his pantry and finds some ginger snap biscuits, which he puts on a floral pattern plate he found in Paris. He usually reserves the plate for guests of honor or… ingredients of honor at parties. He wants it to be a domestic item with Will.

Hannibal goes to the window in the kitchen while he waits for the water to boil. It's about midday now, and the sun is coming in full force. Sometimes Hannibal will shrink away from the light of day. It makes him think of old stories of vampires, and sometimes he wonders if he is just a supernatural creature, trapped in the flesh of a human body. Unable to stand the sun. Unable to love or be loved.

Yet he *can* love- Will is proof of that. Mischa is proof of that. He stands in the kitchen now, closing his eyes and tilting his head up to feel the rays of light warm his face. His lips form a smile, and he knows that humanity lies in his skin, despite what anyone might say.

The kettle's whistle snaps him out of his reverie, and he quickly takes it off the burner. He makes sure the stove is off (he turns the knob three- no four times, just in case), and carries it over to the island where the mugs and biscuits rest. He slowly pours the boiling water into the mugs, taking care not to spill a drop. He takes a timer from a counter under the cabinets and sets it for four minutes.

"You making something?"

Will's voice nearly makes his skeleton jump out of his skin; he hadn't even heard the other man come down the stairs. He's wearing a pair of Hannibal's dark gray sweatpants, along with a simple white T-shirt. He appears to have stolen some of Hannibal's thick socks, and these have a red and black striped pattern adorning them. His hair is still damp from the shower, making some patches stick to his skin and others puff out at odd angles. The older man's heart swells and skips a few beats. Yes, Hannibal supposes he is very human indeed.

"Just some tea. I have some ginger snaps as well, if you'd like," Hannibal offers, and gestures to the plate of biscuits. Will gives him a quiet thanks and takes a ginger snap. He picks out a napkin from a holder that rests on the island and holds it under the ginger snap as he takes a bite. He hums softly in satisfaction, and Hannibal's heart sings in harmony.

"What did you want to talk about?" Hannibal blurts out. There had to have been a better way to ask, or better time, but the doctor wants to get the conversation going. He doesn't want to wait and let anything fester- he's tired of that.

Will's reaction is… interesting. His eyes betray little emotion, his mouth continues to chew the biscuit, but his skin flushes a dark red immediately after Hannibal's question. He's embarrassed and trying his best to hide it. It almost makes Hannibal smile, but he's worried something is wrong.

"I found your basement," Will admits quietly. He puts the biscuit in the napkin and sets them down on the counter. It appears he doesn't want to beat around the bush either.

Hannibal opens his mouth, not even sure what he's going to say, but just then the timer rings. It makes both men jump, but Hannibal jumps into action. His body is busying itself with the tea bags, but his mind is definitely going off the rails. He can't garner Will's full reaction to what he saw, only that he seems… embarrassed? Awkward? He disposes of the tea bags and hands a mug to Will. The younger man grants him a quick smile that disappears instantly. He sips his tea. Hannibal struggles to put his thoughts into words.

"How did… is there… did you not… Do you not like it?" Hannibal finishes lamely. His thoughts jump straight to redecoration, but he knows that's not all Will might not like about the basement. He says he's okay with everything, even that he wants to be a part of it all with Hannibal, but to bear witness to Hannibal deems truly his alone-

“I did like it,” Will admits quietly. His face, if possible, flushes redder. Hannibal cocks his head to the side questioningly.

“Then why- you seem uncomfortable,” Hannibal says vaguely. He tries to keep his words open-ended, encouraging Will to say what’s truly on his mind.

To the older man’s complete surprise, Will bursts into a fit of hysterical laughter. Hannibal can’t keep a chuckle of his own from escaping, but it has a confused tone to it. When Will’s laughter dies down, he has to wipe a tear from his eye. Hannibal has never felt so confused.

“I really did like it, Hannibal,” Will says, his voice dipping low. It makes a burst of heat flash through Hannibal’s body. Will shifts closer, making the side of their bodies touch. Hannibal’s flesh must be melting off his bones- he’s on fire. How can one man affect him this much?

“I liked it so much,” Will whispers directly in his ear, and Hannibal can’t stop a soft gasp from leaving his mouth. “That I came at the thought of you and I together down there.” Hannibal can’t breathe. All the air leaves his lungs in a whoosh, and he grips the island edge for stability. Will puts his mug down and pushes up the sleeve of Hannibal’s sweater and begins tracing his fingers lightly up his arm. The hairs on his skin rise instantly, and goosebumps appear rapidly.

“Really,” Hannibal says breathlessly. It’s not a question.

Will chuckles. He uses his fingers to hike up the waist of Hannibal’s sweater and starts fluttering his fingertips on the skin of his stomach. The muscles dance erratically under the younger man’s touch.

“Had to take a shower. And change my clothes,” Will murmurs, voice still directly in his ear. “Got too worked up thinking about you-” his hand travels up to Hannibal’s ribs- “bending me over the table-” his hand goes back down his stomach- “after a kill.” Will’s hand starts to play with the waistband of Hannibal’s boxers.

Now Hannibal really can’t breathe. He keeps one hand gripping the island edge, but the other shakily clasps over Will’s. Their fingers tangle and untangle, moving in a dance, working in

tandem to tease the doctor.

“You were merciless.” Now Will is behind Hannibal, and places both hands to Hannibal’s waist. His voice is in a low, almost mocking tone, setting every nerve ending the psychiatrist has on fire. “Almost cold. Taking me from behind, a butcher knife in one of your hands.” His fingers grab onto one of Hannibal’s wrists. His index finger starts making small circles on his palm, while the rest of his hand grips Hannibal’s wrist. Hannibal’s knees are rapidly losing strength and his breath is coming out in stuttered gasps. The front of his boxers is suddenly all too confining.

Will’s other arm sneaks its way around Hannibal’s waist. The younger man buries his face in Hannibal’s neck.

“Is this ok? Sorry I should have asked-”

“I love you.”

Hannibal can feel the smile being made on the other man’s face. It’s like a brand, one that Hannibal would wear proudly. The corners of his lips come up, stretching wide.

“Want to make that fantasy a reality?”

Hannibal’s knees give out.

chapter 23

Chapter Summary

hannibal and will go on their first hunt.

Chapter Notes

cw: descriptions of violence, blood, killing/maiming

I FUCKING FINISHED THIS!!

I have been monumentally busy and distracted, but I truly did not want to leave this story hanging. I am also willing to write more, but it may take some time. I also wanted to say that I'm not too good at writing violence and I also don't enjoy it, so if the descriptions are vague and feel short, that is why. But I tried to get to the point and give these men an ending (of sorts).

I send my love to y'all, as always. Stay safe, and I hope you know you are loved and appreciated.

Hannibal is doubtless to the wonders that he witnesses of Will each day. People can spout off pretty words and wonderful promises, but the person they truly are can only be shown through their actions.

So while Hannibal is hunched down behind a large, thick bush next to Will, his feelings are fully solidified. He can see the fire burning in Will's blue eyes, a sort of feral gleam that Hannibal knows he must exhibit while he hunts. It is thrilling, to say the least.

They are sitting outside the peaceful suburban home, awaiting the stroke of midnight. Hannibal's pulse thrums with anticipation, and he knows that Will must feel the same. There is a restlessness to the younger man next to him- oh, how Hannibal cannot wait to see how they sate it.

The watch on Will's wrist beeps once, almost silently, to alert them of the hour. It is time. Hannibal can sense the weight of Will's gaze on him, and he turns his head to meet it. The older man knows at that moment that this is a consummation; more so than any romantic gestures or sexual acts can be for a relationship.

The two men move from out behind the shrubbery, their shadows seeming to morph into the shapes of nature's most primal predators in the moonlight. Hannibal takes one side of the house, the one with only one window high above him. There is a dim lamp light emitting a soft glow to the world, but Hannibal knows that is the only light on. He catches Will as he disappears around the corner across from him.

They had agreed that Will would take the lead on this kill; after all, this is to be his first hunt, and the weight of the task is tangible not by the weapons they carry, but of the person they are after. Hannibal listens for the miniscule squeak of the front door being opened and he hurries to hide in the front bushes. He watches Will enter the house, each step he takes matching the beat of Hannibal's heart.

Will closes the door behind him, but leaves it open just a hair so Hannibal's entrance can be a surprise. The doctor waits with bated breath as he imagines Will's ascent to the second floor, the way he walks with his head slightly down to avoid eye contact, until the moment he will meet the gaze of-

The scream is cut off quickly, but Hannibal's expert hearing picks it up. He gets out from behind the bushes and heads up the front steps. He carefully opens the door and shuts it behind him fully. The two of them will head through the window in the back that's low enough to the ground once they are done.

Hannibal's heart could leap right out of his chest as he makes his way up the steps to the second floor. There are five doors leading down the hallway, but Hannibal can see the lamp glow coming out from under the last one all the way down. Oh, and he can hear the faint thumping and groaning coming from behind the door as well.

Hannibal takes his next steps carefully. He wants Will to take his fill, to indulge in this act as much as he can. It is *his* Transformation, *his* true Becoming. Hannibal wants him to first experience it all for himself before he is inserted into the situation. When Hannibal reaches the final door, he stands outside of it, hearing whimpers in between the grunts of his beloved. After a minute, the whimpers are the only thing to be heard. Hannibal holds his breath.

“Hannibal? I know you’re there. You can join us now.”

Hannibal can’t keep the smile off his face if he tries (he doesn’t). The (now former, they can’t stay here after this) psychiatrist pushes open the door and revels in the sight of his beloved’s design.

Jack Crawford’s body is laid out on the floor. His wrists are tied to the legs of the bed frame, the rest of his body spread limply on the hardwood. His clothes are in tatters, long careful cuts slicing the material and displaying bleeding skin. His eyes are covered in a piece of blood-soaked cloth. In his mouth is a simple cloth gag.

Hannibal’s eyes move from his former colleague onto Will. Beautiful, raw Will. They had both opted for Hannibal’s plastic covers, as Jack’s death will be highly investigated by the FBI, so the blood only marries the clear material. Perhaps other hunts will be done during which Hannibal can see Will’s clothes be marked with the spoils of the kill, and he can take his time removing them from his body. Hannibal shudders a little at the thought.

Will had been staring down at Jack’s body from the moment the older man entered, his eyes devoid of any remorse. They weren’t cold, but there would be no regrets for the killing of Jack Crawford from Will. The body wouldn’t be displayed, nor would it be eaten. The design is rudimentary, but it will do its job. This is personal, almost a mercy for the person both of the killers almost could call a friend.

Will finally looks up at Hannibal as the man wanders closer. His eyes brighten when they meet his, and Hannibal receives a similar grin from the one earlier, outside in the bushes. Hannibal fixes his face to match Will’s.

They both hold each other’s gazes for a moment longer, letting Jack stew in his own pain and emotions. When they break, they both simultaneously crouch down, each one on either side of the body. Hannibal glances at Will, trying to communicate his actions through mere looks. Will nods. He’s allowing Hannibal to finish, a generous gift. Their true consummation.

Hannibal rips off the cloth covering Jack’s eyes. He watches as the pupils adjust to the sudden lighting change, then fill with unrelenting fear at the two men hovering beside him.

Hannibal offers a pitying smile.

“Goodbye, Jack,” he whispers. He whips out a carving knife from under his plastic suit and plunges it directly into Jack’s heart. The man’s eyes grow wide with a myriad of emotions- pain, fear, betrayal- until they dim. Will closes them with his fingers.

Hannibal slips the knife back into the folds of his clothes after wiping it clean on Jack’s shirt. Will holds out a hand to the cannibal and they stand up together. They start making their way out of the room. They won’t be eating Jack. The fear had soured him.

“That was-” Hannibal starts, but Will cuts him off.

“Thrilling,” the younger man says, a desperate edge to his voice. Hannibal savors the word in his ears, the pitch and tone of Will’s voice as he says it. It fills him better than any meal.

“We should hurry back. Bella is supposed to return in the morning, but you never know. Always be swift,” Hannibal explains as they reach the back window on the first floor. The moon is shining brightly through the glass. It casts an ethereal glow on Will, who is opening the window. Hannibal just watches him, drinking in every movement the man he loves makes. Will catches him staring and offers a smile. This smile is gentle, filled with love. It is the center of gravity in Hannibal’s universe, saving him from spinning out of control.

Hannibal gestures for Will to climb out first before following. He closes the window behind them. They’ll cut back through the woods towards their car parked somewhere in the center. Hannibal’s gotten very good at driving amongst the trees. However, once they reach the edges of the woods, Hannibal can’t stop himself. He spins Will towards him and pushes their foreheads together. Will makes a noise of surprise, but doesn’t pull away. Instead, he takes off a glove, shoves it into a pocket, and runs his hand through Hannibal’s hair.

“I love you, my dear Will,” Hannibal whispers. The words are so *easy* , so *simple* . No fancy metaphors or half truths. Hannibal didn’t know it was possible for something to be so simple.

“I love you, too, Hannibal,” Will tells him. The strength of the statement is not in the volume of Will’s voice, but in the truth of his words. At that moment, Hannibal knows they will be alright.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!